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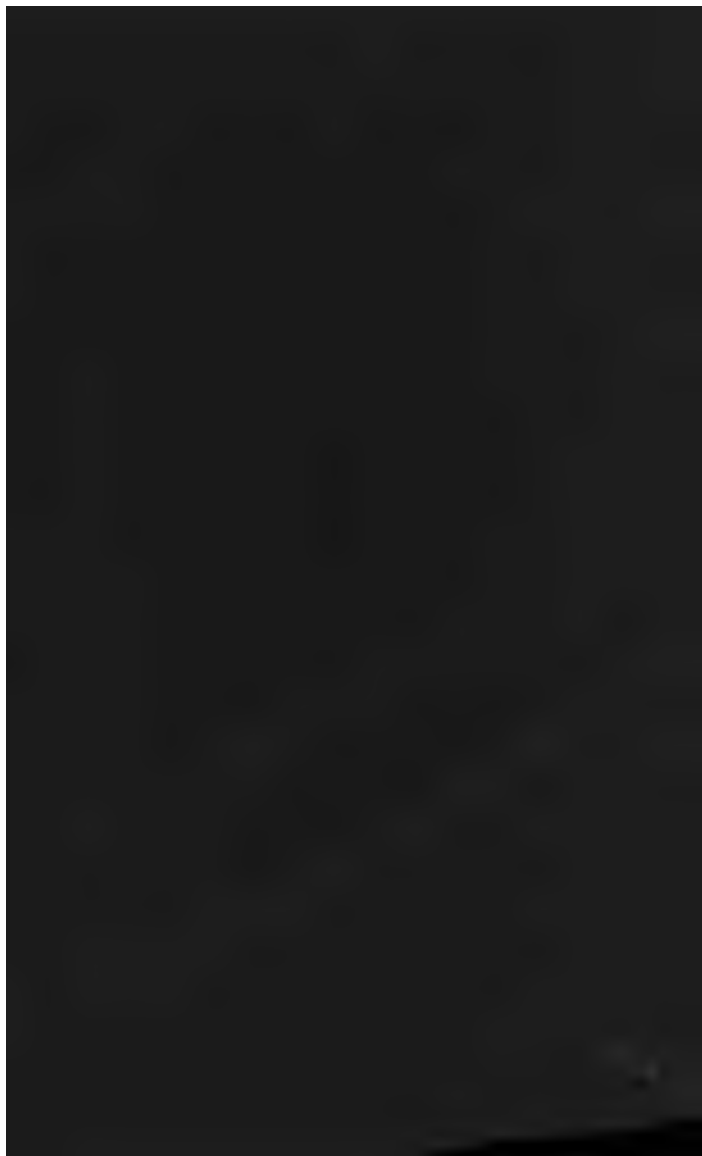
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THE IMMORTALS ;
OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

A Poem.

WITH STEEL FRONTISPIECE, FROM AN ORIGINAL DESIGN.

BY

NICHOLAS MICHELL,

AUTHOR OF

"RUINS OF MANY LANDS," "LONDON IN LIGHT AND DARKNESS," "FAMOUS WOMEN AND
HEROES," "THE POETRY OF CREATION," &c.

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
PROFESSOR MAËDLAR,
(Late Director of the Observatory at Dorpat),

WHO,

AMONG OTHER BRILLIANT ASTRONOMICAL INVESTIGATIONS, WORKED
OUT, WITH INCREDIBLE INDUSTRY, AN AUGUST PROBLEM,
AND PROVED, ALMOST BEYOND DISPUTE, THAT IN
THE MIDST OF THE STARRY HEAVENS
THERE EXISTS

A GREAT CENTRAL SUN,

AROUND WHICH OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM, AND ALL THE SUNS AND
SYSTEMS COMPOSING THE GALAXY OR MILKY WAY,

REVOLVE;

WHEREBY THE BALANCE AND HARMONY OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE
APPEAR TO BE SUSTAINED,

THESE PAGES ARE,

WITH MUCH REVERENTIAL FEELING,

INSCRIBED.



PREFACE.

To escape awhile from the engrossing cares of life and the petty scenes which surround us, in order to visit in thought the Land of the Immortals, and range in imagination ampler and brighter fields of existence, ought to fill the well-constituted mind with pleasure—ought to be regarded even as a duty, if we believe ourselves beings destined to survive the joys and sorrows of the present state.

I would invite, then, in a trustful and reverential spirit, the thoughtless as well as the contemplative; the sincere believer in a written revelation from God,

▲

as well as the incredulous man tossed to and fro on the restless ocean of doubt, to accompany me for a brief time into the regions, not of fear, though of mystery, not of gloom, but wonder and beauty.

The poem of "The Immortals" has occupied the writer for some considerable time, demanding from its nature much careful reflection. The subject is one on which many and conflicting opinions will necessarily exist. Also it offers, there can be no doubt, a wide and an alluring field for the exercise of fancy and imagination; but while fancy must, on some occasions, in these pages, be indulged in, truth, as regards the principal topic considered, is earnestly sought.

The Sacred Record is the foundation on which the following contemplations must rest; at the same time the discoveries of modern science have so greatly enlarged and advanced human knowledge, that none of us need hesitate to embrace opinions, and give utterance to many sentiments, which would have

startled our forefathers. We must, then, regard freed human spirits and angelic intelligences, not in the light men were wont to regard them two or three centuries ago, but as an essential portion of God's creation, drawing exhaustless delight from the universe of beauty and grandeur, and for whom, among other high purposes, that material universe was created, seeing that the mortal must all merge in the immortal at last, and spirits alone live to contemplate and admire the works of Omnipotence.

The late Sir David Brewster, in his very pleasing and able work, "More Worlds than One," written as a reply to the book entitled "Of a Plurality of Worlds," has strongly expressed his opinion in regard to the probability, almost the certainty, that God has created no world without its rational inhabitants. Otherwise we must conclude that the Almighty Architect has built innumerable superb palaces capable of lodging human beings—built them only to remain empty.

In accordance with Sir David Brewster's views, I

believe that not only every planet of our own Solar System, with perhaps one exception, is peopled, but that every planet, invisible to us, which must, from analogy, revolve around every sun nightly adorning our firmament, has its rational human population—beings endowed like ourselves with an immortal principle; for who shall daringly take upon himself to affirm that the Almighty has granted this principle to the inhabitants of our small globe, but denied it to the rational beings of all other worlds?

One of the greatest and most astounding discoveries in the physical universe, since that of universal gravitation by Newton, is undoubtedly the discovery of a central sun. It is now proved, almost with mathematical certainty, that a central world exists, occupying the point around which, obedient to the laws of gravitation, our Solar System, and the innumerable suns and systems composing the Milky Way, are revolving.

That our sun, and the stars erroneously called

“fixed,” have a proper motion in space, Sir William Herschel with some caution announced; but it was left for Argelander, Struve, Maëdlar, and other modern astronomers, to remove every doubt on this subject, and to demonstrate, from close and lengthened observations, that all the visible universe is in motion. This result seems to follow of necessity from the known powers of an infinitely diffused attraction. The very stability and well-being of Creation demand it; for did the suns possess no motion around some common centre, they would, however distantly situated from each other, be inevitably drawn together in the lapse of ages, and then confusion, wreck, and universal chaos, would be substituted for the order and beauty now prevailing.

Professor Maëdlar and others, after a laborious series of investigations, have come to the conclusion that the bright star Alcyoné, the principal member of the Pleiad-group, is that important and wonderful world which occupies the central point in space, and

to which, whatever its magnitude may be, all other worlds do homage.*

They who read this poem must keep in view the great astronomical fact above named, for on it the hypothesis, or the chief theory propounded, is based—a theory which, though it may at first with difficulty gain credence with those unaccustomed to contemplate the magnificent works of the Creator, will not, I think, when the sublime astronomical wonder is calmly and reverently considered, be charged with outraging probability. On the contrary, it will be found to contain, it is sincerely hoped, a truth most precious to man—a truth calculated to inspire confidence, and fill the mind with bright anticipations; while it will invest one world and its group of suns, shining nightly in our heavens, with a peculiar interest and glory.

* Some remarks on the interesting subject of a Central Sun will be found in the Appendix at the close of this volume.

THE IMMORTALS ;

OR,

GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK I.



THE IMMORTALS;
OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK I.

WHERE dwell bright spirits?—o'er the misty hill,
Through the long-vista'd vale, we cast our eyes,
Then up the wide expanse of vacant air,
To those illimitable ether-gulfs,
But nothing meets our anxious, asking sight.
Thus, swayed by erring sense, we wrongly deem
No spirits haunt our globe, no angel-forms
Move through the trackless infinite of calm,
But think yon far-spread regions lifeless space,
An azure wilderness of solitude,
Where cold and silence reign for evermore.

Are worlds thick-peopled? is the forest-leaf,
The water-drop, with countless beings stored,
While nought exists thro' all those mighty depths?
Must they alone be naked? must no life
Exulting pass the wide cerulean plains,
Where all is freedom, purity, and light?
The globes were formed as nursing-bowers for soul
Cradled in matter here; matured and ripe,
She casts her swaddling clothes of fragile clay,
And issues forth to claim, for endless years,
Those skyey mansions, her congenial home.
Nay, 'tis no fable telling us wide heaven,
Though arched so still, so seeming void of life,
Teems with immortals, countless as the sparks
Which fly from Nature's anvil, when she moulds,
From fiery vapours, some new giant sun.

No human sense can pierce the curtained scene,
But brightly opened were the eyes of soul,
A glorious spectacle might 'round us blaze;
Then should we see each mountain-top alive
With rainbow-wing'd, and swift-descending forms;
Spirits would fill the vale each balmy morn,
Or glide at eve above the unbending woods,

And walk the silver of the moon-lit sea.
Around us, too, would guardian-angels float,
A brilliant multitude, and wake no fear,
For brows so gentle, eyes so sweetly-rayed,
Could not inspire a terror, pity's beams
Softening their looks, and robing each with light,
Making more heavenly that which came from heaven,
More beautiful their immortality.

Angels are ministers of love to man ;
They watch the infant's cradle ; they protect
Beauty and trusting Innocence from ill ;
The Guardian-angel oft, in battle's hour,
Wards the fierce thrust, and turns the ball aside ;
She finds the dungeon of the wrong'd, oppress'd,
Soothes his sad heart, and from the cold, dark cell,
Points him again to liberty and light ;
She enters poor Starvation's squalid home,
And, smiling on the haggard, sleeping wretch,
Cheers him with dreams of plenty, till his soul
Leaps high with hope, and overflows with joy.

But not our globe alone Immortals seek,
For all the beauteous planets—Venus, Mars,

And mountain'd Jove, and Saturn's belted sphere,
Their legions haply roam in fond delight.
They haunt each silvery moon, they haunt the sun,
Pass and repass on beams, like bridges thrown
Across the blue, from luminous star to star.
Ay, radiant forms, outnumbering all the leaves
Which fledge earth's forests, glide through ether's
depths—
Spirits once linked to clay, and those that ne'er
Wore the dull fetters of mortality,
The gentle and the beautiful that flashed
From God their source, like showers of amber light,
And every beam a sinless, deathless soul.
There shines no globe, but spirits round it wing,
There spreads no space, but spirits wander there;
As hives with bees, as sleepless brain with thought,
Filled is the universe with active Mind.

Are they in heaven? O no; but every spot,
Smiled on by God, they deem most holy, blest.
What though God's Eden-Land be far away,
He sends them thus to all the peopled worlds (¹)
On mercy-errands, and to draw delight
From wells of loveliness—his wondrous works.

And what is human spirit? false they teach
Who judge it void of substance, parts, or form,
A vaporous shade, a disembodied thought,
That shuns all converse with material scenes ;
That views uncharmed the majesty and pomp
Of green-robed worlds ; **that**, naked and forlorn,
Frequents no home of beauty it might love,
But vaguely dwells in heaven's vague, empty blue ;
Or, an unquiet, melancholy thing,
Courts the dun shades of ebon-lidded Night,
And cheerless roams beneath the freezing moon.

No, it is progress in high Being's march,
Aspiring still, and reaching nearer God.
It hath more searching ken, boasts larger powers,
Than when pent, chained, in mortal prison here ;
And oh ! not saddened when Death cries—away !
Spirit, if clothed with virtue's vest of beams,
Flings its slave-irons back upon the world,
And plunges into liberty and joy.
Joy is the burning basis of its life,
The ambrosial aliment on which it feeds ;
Joy welcomes it to proud, immortal days,
And sounds sweet peans round its airy course,

From living Nature's universal lyre ;
For where no mists of crime make dark and sad,
Creation's face is one broad smile of joy.

Spirit is substance, or material things
Would bow not to its power ;⁽²⁾ it could not view
The palpable, wide universe of God,
Or whisper prayer, or anthem forth His praise.
Most subtle the soul's element may be,
Yet is it more than shadow, dreams, or thought.
The soul is God-breathed life once veiled in flesh,
Now freed, expanded, essence still the same,
Feelings and wishes, hopes and love, unchanged ;
'Twas linked to dust by some mysterious law,
Known but to God, immortal, mortal, joined ;
And as the Almighty raised earth's eldest born,
A faint, dim image, reflex of Himself,
That form may truly type all heavenly forms,
Each angel shaped like mortal beauty here ;
Yet its irradiate, all harmonious frame,
While quickening with each burning energy,
Shares nothing of our darkened, grosser clay,
But, moulded of the ethereal ne'er to change,
Hath self-support, and quenchless inward life,

Impowered to brave all accidents, all time,
And bloom and brighten, e'en when worlds decay.

Too coarse our earthly organs to behold
The fine-knit glancing spirit, yet, proud dust !
Deny not soul exists, substantial formed.
Canst thou behold the air ? yet air has weight ;
Canst thou behold attraction ? yet its power,
Tremendous, draws a planet from its course.
By keen-eyed souls alone are souls perceived ;
Thus since frail man first mourned the lost below,
His longing vision hath not caught a glimpse
Of friend departed, though that friend may move
Still fondly near him, sigh back all his sighs,
Smile when he smiles, and weep when fall his tears,
And, on his stricken bosom, lean in love.

It is not fancy that hath bound bright wings,
Like rainbows set on alabaster hills,
Upon the angel's shoulder. Through all depths
Stretches the ethery ocean, yet so rare,
Comets alone the viewless medium feel.
Our air birds sail ; a million times refined,
The blue abyss is swept by angel-plumes, (3)

Dashing aside the long, long ether-waves,
In phosphorescent undulations bright,
And keeping pace with beams that cross the void
From distant blazing stars ; and ne'er fatigue
The angels feel, thus travelling liquid plains ;
Their arching wings exultant waft them on :
Though haply, wheeling near some fairer globe,
They light at times upon its verdant hills,
Soothe their fine senses in its rosy air,
And feast their eyes on some new Eden's bloom,
Then urge again their journey, springing up
Heaven's shining slopes, like creatures wing'd by
thought.

Deem not our world alone sends spirits forth,
To bask in bliss, or drink the cup of woe ;
Deem not our sun the eldest born of suns :
No, as new globes God mouldeth still in space,
Worlds sprang to burning being, stored with life,
Thousands of ages ere our planet rolled
From out its torpid chrysalis of chaos,*

* That there are suns in the universe which arose at God's fiat previously to the creation of our own luminary, is an

When, loveliest of the lovely orbs of God,
It rode a thing of beauty on the sky,
And swept rejoicing on its sunny path,
With emerald hills and silver-surfaced seas,
Mid shouts and songs of wondering cherubim.

Blest souls exist that walked in mortal bonds,
Where Sirius or the Polar glories blaze,
Long ere our parents opened ravished eyes
In paradisal bowers! The Hebrew sage
Hath nothing writ to shake this lofty faith.—
Are such now old, bowed low their angel-heads?

hypothesis which by no means contradicts the Genesis of Moses. The expressions—"He made the stars also.—And God set them in the firmament of the heaven," do not fix any precise period when they first shone in space; and therefore, in strict accordance with the sacred narrative, we may believe that many of the larger suns, such as *Sirius*, *Arcturus*, and others, the first of which much exceeds in magnitude our own sun, were distinguished by an earlier existence in the history of eternity. That new stars have, from time to time, been discovered where no star before existed, their appearance being totally unassignable to orbital motion, is also a fact which offers a strong argument against the doctrine of simultaneous creation.

Are their eyes dim with viewing new suns flame,
And old ones wane to darkness? (4) Do they crave,
Worn out by an eternity of pomp,
Release from Being's long monotony,
And sigh to lay their aching grandeur down,
Where dumb oblivion, and undreaming peace,
May flood their essence with unconsciousness,
And tomb their wearied immortality?—
No—see that form on yon high mountain-top,
Where shines the oldest of the Pleiad orbs!
His limbs of grace—his locks like twisted beams
Robbed from some golden sunset—godlike eyes,
Bright with heaven-climbing thought, and soft with love,
Intelligence, and rapture, like a crown
Of arrowy glory on his smooth, white brow—
Is this the child of some extinguished star,
Its light e'en quenched before our system rose?
Is this a soul once shrined in dying clay,
Who bowed like us, all weakness, sighed and wept,
Now smiling on a million slow-paced years,
And young in feeling still, as young in frame,
Gathering a bliss as keen from God's great works,
As when at first intoxicated sense
Drank wonder-draughts of rich Creation's wine?

But there are spirits who have never lived
In tenements of flesh ; who sprang at once
Brightly as stars from evening's procreant blue,
And pure and holy as high thoughts from God,
To loftiest life, and beauty passing dreams.
No human woe, no darkening taint of sin,
E'er cast eclipsing shadow on their brows ;
They never felt infirmity or pain,
Nor wept a parting with a dear beloved,
Nor bowed in misery o'er a new-made grave.
O glorious, God-loved creatures ! life's first heirs !
Unfallen spirits ! favored, blissful souls !

Creation of the angels—time there was
When no intelligence of finite power,
Seraph or demon, lived in gulfs of space :*
No silvery wing its trail of radiance left
Along the lifeless wilderness of sky ;

* From the whole tenor of the Hebrew Scriptures, we are led to conceive that angels existed prior to the formation of worlds ; that they were not, however, from eternity, seems sufficiently evident, having been summoned into existence at some remote epoch by Him who had no beginning.

No brow beamed love and rapture ; no rich locks
Waved in the light their streams of restless gold ;
No lips immortal, touched with music-fire,
Thrilled listening ether with a song of joy,
Or voiced an anthem through the calm to God.
Silence, close-guarded by black-vestured Night,
And ceaseless watched by jealous Solitude,
Sat on her ancient, melancholy throne,
And cast her eyes dim, rayless, through the vault,
And drooped her hands that hushed the infinite.

Yet still, O still the great Triune was there,
Veiled in heaven's depths of holiness and calm,
But each bright attribute, of Mercy born,
Locked in His essence, like most precious gold
Now buried deep in some colossal globe.
Beneficence no object found to bless ;
No channel opened, through whose smiling banks
Warm love could pour its affluent, holy tide.
Bliss, if unshared below, scarce seemeth bliss,
For happiness grows more the more it gives,
And, giving nothing, still becometh less,
And withers into weariness and gloom.
But, not like mortals, God in His full self

Hath springs of bliss exhaustless as His power.
Yet now strong love would summon 'round His throne,
Creatures of reason dowered with endless life,
Souls He would fill with joy, with wisdom crown,
While beauty, a new glory, should light up
The desolate spaces of unpeopled sky.

What means the unwonted burst of torrid beams,
Arrowing in coruscations swift and bright,
From the veiled centre of the universe ?
The shafts fly silverly across the gloom ;
They reach grim Darkness in his farthest seat,
And startle Desolation. Ether glows
With rosy tints, foretelling earth-born flowers,
Its depths all trem'lous as with ecstasy.
Soft shine the vaporous sides of forming globes ;
Harmonious sounds go pulsing thro' the void,
Sweet yet supernal music, from the source
Whence music afterwards gushed richly down
To ravish new-made worlds. A something strange,
That ne'er before had stirred the unliving depths ;
A movement of the Almighty's presence, felt
Like breath of being through the shining vast,
Proclaimed that life and intellect, enshrined

In forms immortal, were about to burst
From the dim gulf of nothing.

Softly pure,
There shone a circle of white, stainless rays ;
That circle swept a million, million miles,
And girt the Ancient Throne, and now it glowed
A deeper flame, as if its hues were caught
From amethysts and rubies. One vast iris
Seemed ringing the great central gulf of space ;
Or it was like the belt, though mightier far,
Bathed in some blood-red sunset, girding now
The tinted orb of Saturn.—Ray by ray,
The circle blazed more grandly ; ray by ray,
It flashed intolerably, blinding-bright,
And, quivering into motion, seemed to live.

There was a sparkling of innumerable eyes,
A spreading of a luminous cloud of wings,
There was a burst—a long, wild burst of joy.
Uprose a host of fair, ethereal forms,
Complete their dazzling beauty, feeling, sense,
Complete their keen and lofty intellects.
Trembling in holy rapture, thick they stood,

As flowers on some wide wilderness in Spring,
Stirred by the fondling gales; as stars that rush,
When night comes down, in legions o'er the sky,
Till all the blue, one radiant battle-field,
Doth burn and glitter with their golden arms.

O new-felt life! O gushing bliss of being!
For the first time to cleave the yielding air,
For the first time to gaze, to think, to love!
With eye-wide wonder each the other viewed,
And, wondering still, they scanned heaven's boundless
vault,
While awe-held myriads silently upturned,
Like vassal-flowers to their bright sovereign sun,
Adoring brows to that dread, hallowed blaze,
Where dwelt the Great Unseen; and then they
bowed,
Folding their hands instinctively in prayer.
Bright, sinless creatures, beautiful as good,
Whose feelings were all flame, whose lips were praise,
Whose every sense was throbbing ecstasy,
Their aspirations a pure fire of joy,
Kindling each breast, ascending evermore.

The ring of glory, now all angel-forms,
Broke into radiant masses—living stars,
That flashed and sparkled in the azure calm—
Life-moulded dreams which filled the mind of God.
Cherubs, with lightning-looks that spoke desire
To grasp all knowledge, restless wing'd the sky,
And rose in spires, and sought to pierce the veil
Of myst'ry and of wonder; worlds ere long
Would charm and satisfy their thirsting souls;
Seraphs with seraphs grouped, for theirs to feel
A lofty adoration; and their eyes,
Lifted to Deity, displayed pure depths
Of holy yearning, and centred love.
Already o'er the host, by strength of mind,
More nobly fashioned, and as leaders hailed,
Archangels towered, and calm, majestic, looked
Embodied dignity, and placid might,
Leaning upon the blue, apart and still,
Like demigods in meditation sunk.—
Heaven doomed not these to fall from seats of bliss;
The rebel angels sprang from other hosts,
Called afterwards by God to endless days.

The light, out-flashing from the centre, shone

On all those wings, till each did seem a flame
Starting from shoulders of unmelting snow—
A flame anon that softened into roses,
As roses bloom on earth when steeped in dew—
That softened into living, downy gold.

A peal of thunder, solemn, deep, proclaimed
The first Immortals thus create by God.
That thunder rolled—in quivering waves, rolled out,
Mighty and wide, along the sea of space;
Unchecked, sublime, its strong vibrations swept,
Not slowly, as sound drags its heavy march
In our dull air, but hurrying with the speed
Of light-shafts from the quiver of the sun.
It lessened not, in volumes pealing on,
E'en to the confines of those gulfs where soon
Would hang the finished worlds. It told pale Silence,
It told sad Solitude amidst her gloom,
It told Annihilation on her walk,
That life now triumphed in the lifeless wastes,
That God had raised to being glorious souls,
Minds charged with feeling, love, and lofty thought;
Sweet angel-flowers that ne'er would droop or fade,

Young beauteous forms time could not rob of grace,
Bright intellects to suffer no eclipse,
Children of immortality and joy.

THE IMMORTALS ;
OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK II.

AGES, as men count ages, rolled their waves,
Myriads on myriads, breaking on the shore
Of steadfast Time, and still more ages swept,
Leaving but foam upon the shaken sand,
And every bubble a long thousand years.
Worlds, systems multitudinous as vast,
Immense creations, in immenser space,
Have poured, from all their nurseries of life,
Undying souls into the Spirit-land ;
Millions to brood in woe, their just award,
Millions to rove in light and endless bliss ;
The last e'en trebling the angelic bands
That mortal chains ne'er fettered to the dust ;

And though less glory crowns the human soul,
It shares with angels Godhead's favoring smile,
Drinking with them life's waters sparkling, pure,
From rapture's cisterns thro' eternity.

Oh ! think not spirits, though divorced from clay,
No longer hover 'mid material things,
No longer love the beauteous works of God ;
Yes, they admire the globes their Maker framed,
With vales and sounding oceans, stamping deep
The seal of beauty on their glorious fronts.
Not for frail man alone those worlds arose,
But to delight immortals, and to yield,
With other raptures burning in high heaven,
A joy for ever to angelic hosts.

Oft angels, from the upper paradise,
Descend to view world-Edens blooming still,
Those lower gardens beautifying space.
Thus do Immortals, down Heaven's azure road,
Shod with the sunbeam's brilliancy and speed,
Glide to our far small Earth—O small, but fair,
Clothed with a beauty angels vainly seek
In bright-ringed Saturn, or in moony Jove—

A loveliness e'en passing that displayed
By grand Orion's train, or worlds that walk
Round golden-throned Arcturus. Man, dull Man !
Who sees no charm in God's great handywork,
Who thinks to soar by blindly scorning earth,
Calling its radiance dark, its beauties vile,
And cursed of God, and hurrying to its doom—
Oh ! 'tis his soul, and not the world, immersed
In this black shadow of eclipsing ill.

Earth ! favored Earth ! rich-vestured, bride-like
Earth !

That springeth jubilant upon her path,
As freshly now, untired, and full of youth,
As when first launched upon her rushing way,
Singing along the pure, bright air for joy.
She hath no mountain, but Archangels' feet
Might tread it with admiring, reverent awe ;
She hath no vale, but Seraphs there might walk,
And lessons learn from beauties decking clay,
The humblest flower a teacher eloquent,
Preaching of love and God. Great ocean's face,
Gathered to frowns, when storms convulse his heart,
Or smiling to the stars in peace and calm,

Offereth a glorious sight to eyes of soul ;
While his long waves, deep-booming round his shores,
Form a sonorous organ, whose grand notes
May float far out on ether's thrilling paths,
A solemn anthem e'en in angels' ears.

Each scene on earth, or wild, or beautiful,
Hath spells to charm the travellers of the sky ;
Their subtile senses, like their minds, surpass
In fineness and acuteness, human powers ;
And as the bee from herbs sucks honey-dew
No art may gather, so, from all around,
They draw pure, sweet delight, to man unknown.

They love the Spring, for then young Joy, released
From Winter's prison, dances fetterless
Along the exulting world. Few sights so dear
To angel eyes, as wakening throbs of bliss,
Pulsing from Nature's heart through all her veins.
Now down yon azure troops of glittering forms
Dart in bright lines, like shafts of silver sent
From Heaven's full quiver. On the breezy hills
They stand, immortal graces, wing'd with beams,
Viewing the freshened scene, and drinking balm.

They haunt the woods, though hid from mortal ken,
 • Or linger by the cool and crystal wells,
 Types of their own pure nature. Far away,
 In the lone wilderness, Spring's thrilling lip
 Kisses up flowers from rude, uncultured earth;
 Why bloom they there? no mortal treads the waste,
 To view their brilliant hues, or breathe their scents;
 Nor can they charm wild bird, or savage beast;
 Their beauty springs—for God forms naught in vain—
 To glad the wandering angels. Flashing down,
 The skyey pilgrims, shining groups, alight;
 And they who, awed and ravished, watched the march
 Of mighty planets thro' unmeasured heaven,
 And listened crashing thunder, feel as rapt,
 And lost in marvel, o'er a tiny flower.
 They scan with curious eyes its growth, its veins,
 Its sappy stem, and gaily-painted leaves,
 Its honied cup for bees to riot in,
 And all its living fabric, tasking skill
 As high and wonderful, as power that orb'd
 The glorious sun which warms its musky breast.

Heaven's gentle children thus most brightly read
 God's love of beauty on a humble page,

Whose lines and syllables are sun-kissed flowers,
And each sweet glowing letter spelling—love.
Oh, searching all things fair, through all the worlds,
Angels find nothing beautiful as flowers !

They love the greenery by long-winding streams,
Or the smooth silver of a summer lake,
Where, oft inspired by beauty's richest forms,
They chant to Nature's God divinest song.
O sweet, sweet lakes ! there each delightful dream,
And gorgeous fancy, finds material shape—
The sloping velvet hill, the willow'd bank,
The trees that spring more tall, with greener boughs ;
The shore's soft undulations—beauty's lines ;
The resting waters smoothed to crystal sheets,
So that blue skies see other skies below,
And in that glass the stars each evening peer,
To mark how fair their pearly foreheads shine.
We muse in loneliness, yet feel not lone,
For birds, and butterflies, and fairy things,
Will thickest haunt the bosky banks of lakes.
We own the pensiveness that makes not sad,
For rapturous Thought sits ever by the lake,
Conversing with the outer, inner world.

When Summer bares her bosom to the gale,
And walks the Southern Alps with beamy eyes,
And waves her mantle o'er the singing woods,
Dyeing them, by its shadow, living green,
Ye meet no lovelier waters than the lake
Clasped in the arms of Como's liliated shores.
The sun rides high, but pours not fainting heat ;
A softly-pulsing air from Alpine peaks
Wafts a refreshing coolness. On the banks
The idle fisher idly leans his form,
His bliss to think of nothing. Bloomy fruit
Hangs temptingly in rounding, ripening orbs,
From low-depending boughs ; and Bacchic vines
Wanton adown the many-coloured rocks.
The swans, where bordering chesnuts cast their shade,
Cluster to sleep, gold bills beneath their wings ;
And frequent from the wave, with silvery sides,
The fish updarts, quick circles spreading round ;
Circles, like generous love which opens wide,
And wider still, to embrace all human kind.
Flowers, by the water's edge, bend low their eyes,
Each seeming, like that fabled youth of eld,
To pine for its own beauty, while it breathes
Sighs in delicious scents. The massive woods,

That drowse in fragrant gloom along the steeps,
Hear through their depths the chant of listless birds ;
While, swinging slow from some grey cloister-tower,
The voice of Time floats heavily on air,
Deepening the solitude, till, o'er the hills,
Dies that small echo from eternity,
And peace again laps all the blissful scene.

He doth not dream who places angels here,
Enamoured of the lovely, bright, and calm ;
They hover o'er each leafy steep ; they stand
Musing upon each purple promontory.
Their widely-glancing, penetrating eyes
Pierce to the heart of every beauteous thing,
Each bosom feeling gratitude intense
To Nature's ruling lord, whose bounty spreads,
For them and man, such feast of loveliness.
But most the immortal ones, who seek our globe,
Love starry Night to adore the God of worlds.
O mother of sweet fancies, balmy Night !
Her voiceless, holy hour doth breathe a spell
That soothes our mortal natures. Midst the hush
That seems to hold the listening universe,
Memory unlocks her gates, and prying soul

Turns searching thought upon her inner self,
Then mounts from self to scan the vast of heaven,
The luminous page by God's own finger writ.
Yet viewing yon blue paradise of stars,
So tranquil and so stirless, with no smile
Traced on the everlasting, silent sky,
Calm, solemn, through the storms and changes here,
Calm, solemn, through the infinite of ages—
The feeling presses on us that a grief,
A sorrow born of far eternal years,
Lies brooding at Creation's mighty heart.
Perchance our own vague fancies image this,
Colouring the worlds, and that no real gloom
Palls the grand works of Heaven's Artificer:
We gaze, and muse, and vainly ask to soar
Above earth's mists to Heaven's bright mountain-top
We long to end all mystery, and unveil
The jealous Isis of the dark unknown.

O loving Night! O dreamful, holy Night!
How sweet to watch our fair, abandoned Earth,
Like a young babe, asleep! its recent sobs
Of evening breezes, and the merry laugh
Of jocund life, all kissed to gentlest peace.

A tear hangs sparkling on its cheek of bloom—
The dews by fairies sprinkled ; and its hair,
Not shaking wantonly in thickest curls,
Falls smooth and glossy from the placid brow,
For woods are drooping on each mountain's crest,
The foliage shining 'neath the shining stars,
Unruffled by the fingers of a wind.

Yes, Earth, the infant, sleeps, no sound above,
No strife below, to break its heavenly rest.
'Tis now that peace-enamoured angels come,
Walking upon the stars' white sloping beams,
Folding their wings to glide more stilly on—
Come from their bowers in distant paradise,
To watch the world and mortals in repose,
To bless earth's saddened heart with golden dreams
Of primal joy and beauty, and to bear
Freed human spirits up the calm to heaven.

Thus angels and Intelligences crowd
Our lower skies, still bent on acts of love.
Nature for them, through all her empire, smiles ;
The day, the night, the common walks of life,
The umbrageous hill, the flower-clad wilderness,
Teem with the forms that visit us from heaven.

There's nothing lovely but they prize and love ;
There's nothing grand but bids them glow and thrill,
Lifting their fervid being up to God.
Yes, all existent things where beauty shines,
Fill angel-minds with pleasure—minds that grasp
Boundlessly great, and infinitely small ;
Now contemplating God, now dying man,
Now huge world-systems, now a bead of dew.
But these are creatures never linked to clay,
Or stained by crime. The souls through woman born,
Ere freed from life, and raised to their high state,
Are but dark-dungeoned, iron-fettered slaves ;
They crouch behind their bars, and view obscure
The outer, glorious world ; the gaoler life
Keeps close the cell, and firmly binds the chain.
Most spirits grasp their bonds with desperate strength,
And mourn if told their freedom-hour is nigh ;
Yet souls exist who long to burst away,
And wander into liberty and light.

The young, high-born, the courted of the world,
The beautiful, as beauty shineth here,
Lay pallid on her pillow. Mind for her
Proved all too active, and, with ceaseless play,

Exhausting strength, wore out the wheels of life.
She had two loves that halved her fervid soul,
Yet seeming blended while they kept apart,
Like married colours of the aërial bow—
The love of knowledge, and the love of Heaven.
Unlike her sex, who reap their richest joy
From life's gay fields, and harvests of the heart,
She burned to pierce the dim mysterious depths
Of mind and God's creation. Nought to her
This present busy scene; she would but know
The ancient past, the fateful yet to be,
And longed to lift the veil that closely shrouds
The unconceptioned, radiant spirit-land.

Like lilies heavy with the dews of Night,
Fair mourners bowed their heads, and shed their tears,
Around that couch of death. Ah! blind to soul,
They saw but beauty waning to the tomb,
The bright-rayed star eclipsed: their ears but caught
The last faint words of music, soon for them
To close in endless silence. Death would prove
The severer of the bonds they felt so sweet,
The quencher of the fire by genius lit;
And so in hopeless bitterness they wept.

O that the beautiful should fade and die !
O cruel law of harsh, unpitying fate !—
Thus cries poor human wisdom. We admire
Ashes in loveliness—a glowworm's spark
In brightest human wit ; the glimmering light
Is trampled out by Death's rude iron foot.
Is there a star, high hung in heaven's soft blue,
More happy than our own ? where never crime
Drew its dire trail o'er stainless human hearts ?
Where beauty, as it shineth pure from God,
Defies decay—defies strong time and death,
All that was mortal passing up to Heaven,
Untouched by the Destroyer, mouldering not
In Mother earth, the grave a thing unknown,
But swiftly, as life changes, putting on
The radiant vestments of eternity ?

More frail each moment grew the slender link,
Binding the ethereal part to meaner clay ;
But soul, like some rejoicing tree in Spring
Quick-bursting into bloom, put forth its powers ;
Memories, late dormant, started from repose,
And hope that stream-like crept in doubt's thick shade,
Flashed into certainty's bright, cheerful sun.

The spirit thus, while Nature earthward sank,
Seemed to spread eagle-pinions, and assume
Its Heaven-born independence. Death gloomed near,
Waiting to cut the quivering thread of life ;
But when the hour of spirit's freedom comes,
And it shall drop the covering, winging forth
From poor mortality's dead chrysalis,
Oh ! what shall greet it in that untried state ?
Expectant, trembling, shall the stranger stand,
Without a home, without a guiding friend ?
Or shall it see God's glory fill the sky,
Ushered at once to paradisaal bowers,
The child of life, the heir of endless joy ?

A shade fell deepening on the face, like Night
Dropping on some sweet landscape, yet a flash
Broke from the eye, the spirit's last retreat—
The eye which soul looks through, ere leaving
dust,
The expresser of its bright divinity,
The outlet of all feeling, where the lamp
Of consciousness first burns, and last expires.

'Twas o'er—she ceased to live. Oh ! wondrous change

A moment worketh in us tow'rd the dead !
The beautiful we lately clasped and kissed,
Though still most beauteous, treasured, and heart-loved,
Hath turned, we know not why, a thing of fear :
We gaze, yet solemn, mournful is the spell
That binds us tremulous to the pale one's side.
We cannot smile in presence of hushed death ;
And yet we kiss that forehead, smooth and cold,
While the touch chills us, creeping through each vein ;
We love, we mourn, but fear doth run through all
Our gentlest feelings, like a sable snake
Trailing its volumes 'mid the sweetest flowers.
We may not talk, but hold our breath in awe,
Or trembling, kneel and pray.—O myst'ry dread !
Unsolved by all the anxious, searching ages,
By all the wisdom, thought, and lore of man—
The body's dissolution !—that sharp knife
Dividing soul from matter—that strong wing
By which we mount to immortality ;
That passage, dark and terrible to flesh,
Which leads through wintry gloom to instant Spring !

'Twas o'er ; a quiet atmosphere of grief
Now filled that shaded room. As lightning, long

Held captive in the heavy, murky cloud,
Leaps, on a sudden, into fiery strength ;
So spirit, from the cloud of matter freed,
Forth flashes into new and burning life ;
Save that the flame of lightning doth return
To former sleep, its lambent ardour spent,
While quenchless soul sweeps on for evermore.

No pang—no shock—no terror—but most calm,
Most gently, in a moment, spirit passed
From human trouble to the land of peace.
'Twas as a star occulted by the moon—
A star that, lately curtained, issues now
Placid and glittering, sailing on the blue,
Without a stain or shadow. That young soul,
Saved by Christ's love, and pardoned by her God,
Is Mind now shaped in a celestial mould,
All independent of poor perished clay.

Hark ! as she rises o'er the mists of earth,
The sounds of greeting from immortal lips ;
For angel-beings, sent by Heaven to watch
The world's inhabitants, and guard their souls,
Are hovering thick and dazzling in the air.

Music is stealing down the brilliant sky,
Sweet in its melting cadence, as if poured
Through golden-opening doors from Paradise.
The spirit hears the "welcomes" of the blest;
Glory is shining round her like a robe;
Rapture is steeping every thrilling sense.
Where is thy fear, thy gloom, O conquered Death?
They bear her to the land where reigns no night,
Where flowers ne'er fade, where knowledge growing still,
And the grand secrets of the universe,
Will satisfy the ardent thirst of mind,
Through dateless, unimaginable years.

THE IMMORTALS;
 OR,
 GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK III.

MOTION is life—the secret of the worlds,
 The golden harmony of earth and heaven;
 Oh! beautiful, wide-spread, supporting law!—
 The infant flower, warm-cradled in the vale,
 Shoots slowly, and unfolds its breast of sweets,
 While nectarous sap runs ever through its veins.
 The oak, a mountain warrior, dares the blast,
 Tossing its giant, brown-mailed arms abroad;
 If screened and still, it sickens, droops, and dies.
 The air ne'er rests through all its viewless depths;
 The buoyant cloud, the chariot of young Health,
 Races with winds, and skims the plains of sky;

The river, folding Plenty in its arms,
Sweeps through the laughing land: the ancient Sea,
Since poured by God into the mighty gulfs,
Covering the world's foundations, hath not known
Slumber or pause, but heaved beneath the moon,
Rolled in bright waves when calm caressed his brow,
Or, speaking thunder, battled with the storm.

Motion is life; ere conscious being's flame
Lights the brain's marvellous halls, the feeble heart
Begins its pulsings—from the birth-hour beats,
Throb—throb; and if but one poor minute cease
This wondrous action of a power unseen—
This bosom life-clock—this quick-flying wheel,
The palsied frame is dust. The mind ne'er rests,
Busy awake, and dreaming in repose;
It grasps near objects, flies to scenes remote,
Or, passing time, roams vague eternity.
Yon maiden Moon ne'er tarries in the sky,
To rest her on her weary pilgrimage,
But, with bound hair and silver-sandall'd feet,
Doth glide for ever 'round her Mistress, Earth.
The lady Earth as active walks the blue,
And, fixing on the North her loving eye,

Hastes, but majestic and full of grace,
With all her mountains and her foaming seas,
Her busy, populous continents and isles,
Around her lord, the Sun ; one month supine,
One week, 'mid ages, staying on her course,
And mad Destruction, the fine balance lost,
Would draw her reeling to the central fire,
And whelm her pride, her beauty, and her bloom.

Is there a spot in all yon boundless sky,
Where motion doth not reign? where soul might dwell
And cry exulting—rest at last is found!
O monarch Sun! compelling force of heaven!
Chainer of comets! lord of docile globes!
That on thy throne sit'st mighty, like a grand
Embodiment of awful Deity!
Robed in an atmosphere of dazzling fire,
Thine everlasting, giant energies,
Perplexing while astounding finite mind,
Looking at once a glory and a dread,
Abroad upon thy slaves, the governed worlds!
Rest surely dwells with thee, thy steadfast power
Owning no power stupendous as thine own:
Surely thou serv'st no huger body, hung

In ether's depths by God, thou, only thou,
The unchanging mid the changed, as ages march,
Firm-fixed in glowing space, as though we viewed
Some monstrous bark that rides the blue abyss,
Its ponderous anchor cast, down, deeply down,
In the broad sea-caves of immensity.

No, a link only in the chain of suns,
One star-bead mid the crowd of nobler globes,
Our radiant king appears—and yet not king,
A loftier rules afar. Behold ! he moves !
Obedient to the fiat—nought must rest ;
He moves, and serves another ! With swift course,
His giant, blazing bulk, ploughs yielding space—
He moves, and, at his flaming chariot-wheels,
Draws the unconscious earth and planet-throng.*

We travel 'mid the spangled Milky-Way,
Companioned by a million brother-suns ;
For they too journey the cerulean waste ;

* For remarks on the discovery of our sun's proper motion in space, and its presumed revolution around a great Central World, see Appendix at the end of this volume.

No world of all the hosts adorning heaven,
Though seeming fixed, but holdeth on its calm,
Eternal march thro' hushed infinitude.
And whither tend we on our dazzling course,
Sweeping, since Earth was born, among the stars?
Some powerful centre draws us, some great land
In mystery veiled, some glory next to God's;
But not one round the rapid sun hath traced
Since Adam walked the world. How vast the path!
And yet 'tis Heaven's design, all Nature cries,
That, circle upon circle, earth should make,
In safety and in splendour, with her lord,
Around this distant globe. The flying angels
Pass us upon their way from that grand sphere;
They circumnavigate the aërial sea;
They mark new Edens bloom, old Edens fade,
World-populations rise, and fall extinct,
Then cross our path again, for nought to them
The long, long ages mortals shrink to name,
Counted by deathless eyes that never sleep,
On the great dial of eternity.

The Milky-Way, amidst whose stellar gems
Burns our own sun, thus moves thro' all its mass,

In concord and in music, watched by God.
 Yes, motion saves us ; but for motion's law,
 Suns would attract huge suns, howe'er remote,
 And systems, in the round of ages, meet
 Clashing with systems, till one chaos dire
 Would whelm the lost, depopulated globes.
 O wondrous foresight of Creative Mind !
 O world-towers built for sempiternal years !
 Grand, faultless engineering of the sky !

Yet here, e'en here, the Almighty doth not close
 The awful volume of his works, as done,
 Doth not exclaim unto Creation's wave—
 "Dash thou no further !" still the billows roll,
 O'ervaulting bounds, all, all but infinite.*
 Look through the windows of the Milky-Way
 On space beyond—outstretching, yawning space !
 Faint on the bosom of the azure Night,
 Ye ken star-islands—other Milky-Ways,

* Argue as we may, we are driven to the conclusion that Nature must have a termination somewhere. That which has a visible commencement must have a close. That which has solid extension and weight cannot be infinite. There are but three infinities—duration, space, and God.

Complete with all their suns. (b) There motion, too
Marshalls the hosts of life-abounding spheres,
And sounds the trump of golden harmony.
Those systems move—'round what?—our sparkling ma
Of older suns, our mightier astral scheme—
Move in vast orbits thought e'en fails to trace,
Consuming ages baffling human dreams.

Thus is gigantic Nature held and swayed,
E'en as a steed that scours the level plain,
Guided by some strong rider. Balanced all,
The shining glories journey, smooth and calm,
Seeking some far-off centre. Reason ne'er
May grasp the great conception; Faith herself,
Though science paints the wonder to the soul,
Bright as the lightning's flash, recoils and bows
Beneath the weight of this tremendous truth.
Where is the Central World, the king of worlds?
The capital of Nature's vast domains?
The battlements whence angels may look out,
Watching the universe thro' all its bounds;
The royal tower whence heaven's swift heralds fly
On missions to far worlds; the huge, bright sun,
Poised at the point where gravitation dwells,

And ruling thus all other subject suns,
 And lighting, like a glorious torch, the way
 To God's bright Eden, lying still beyond.

It is no dream ; to mortal vision plain
 This monarch globe exists. Keen science points
 Her truth-revealing wand to Northern skies,
 And 'mid the Pleiads shows the giant star,
 Whose power, wide issuing, sways the universe. (6)
 Thou blest Alcyoné ! thou favoured sphere !
 Most beauteous 'mid the beautiful on high,
 The glory of all glories visible !
 Raising within us feelings born of awe,
 And dreams of power and dread magnificence.

That globe in hugeness mocks our labouring thought,
 Tho' dwarfed by distance to a golden spark.
 Pale scholar ! lone enthusiast ! worldling ! come !
 Meek child of God ! proud bigot ! sceptic ! come !
 Searcher for truth, blind error's wandering dupe,
 Soaring or grovelling spirits ! come, O come !
 Lift in the midnight's calm no doubting eye ;
 Though dumb, eternal silence wrap the pole,
 And no wing'd form, to mortal sense, may glide

Down the long beam to tell the secret here,
This very world shall greet thee, mirror'd true
On thy small dying eye, while neighbouring suns
Add radiance to the scene. O gaze, and thrill,
Ponder, exult, that near those clustering worlds,
Or calm within the circle they infold,
Thus in the midst of God's creation placed,
As suited unto seats so vast, august,
The immortal regions of delight may bloom,
The paradise of angels and of souls. (?)

There are some secrets never to be told
To spirits while on earth. 'Tis God's high will,
A veil impenetrable as the dark
Which hides futurity from mortal view,
Should shroud the holy mysteries of that state
Of full beatitude and perfect peace.
The finite cannot grasp, in mortal hour,
The immortal and the infinite ; yet soul,
While in its narrow, crumbling house of clay,
May reverent ponder, search, conjecture, hope,
See by the light Truth's hallowed records lend,
Track Nature's laws that point from earth to God,
And mount on wings of thought to highest Heaven

The Central Sun is but a lamp that lights,
With smiles from God, the Eden-land of souls, (*)
And other suns illumine the immense abodes,
Within those spaces of eternal rest.
O what a scene of splendour ! suns above,
And suns below—no night, no winter there,
And one great sun the monarch of the rest—
Orbs with more richness, softness in their glow,
Than suns shed here, and beaming evermore.
But the weak hand that fain would paint in shade
One glory-scene, drops paralysed, and still
The lip must cry to mysteries unrevealed,
How dark is reason, and how frail is dust !

Enough for man to know, God's chosen Land,
The garden walked by holiness and joy,
Lies guarded and surrounded thus by suns,
The radiant centre of all spirit-life,
In the grand centre of material things—
Vast globes of finer matter, for the feet
Of forms ethereal, whence keen spirit-eyes
May range unchecked Creation's utmost bounds,
And drink in rapture from a million worlds.
Vast globes of finer matter ; for our God

Hath promised us new bodies clothing soul,
And these demand a bright material home ;
Vast globes of finer matter, robed by Heaven
In vesture more magnificent, sublime,
More sumptuous than arrays all other globes ;
Ay, Nature, handmaid of eternity,
Throws her rich spell o'er all the mighty scene.
If valleys charm the gaze in our small star,
And live-green woods, and flower-marg'd crystal
streams,
And mountains that hold converse with the clouds,
How must they ravish in that vast abode,
Created to yield bliss to perfect Mind ?
Where immortality hath brightly passed
From Spirit to great Nature ; whose attire
Is woven of a web that wears not out ;
Whose gorgeous hues, like soul, can never fade ;
While beauty's seal, affixed by God's own hand,
Glow's on each object never touched by Time—
Time that will crush all fair sublunar things ;
Change and Decay, earth's dark unpitying lords,
And iron-footed Ruin, there unknown.

O thou supernal seat, beyond this world

Of crime and suffering ! tost by tempests here,
And dreading shipwreck on the rocks of woe,
How blest to lift our gaze, and think of thee !
Now as the shades fall round me, and hushed Night
Arches the world with clearest crystalline,
I'll stand on this hill's slope, and musing watch
The Pleiad glories slowly tremble forth ;
There, there, they shine ! how beautiful, how pure,
In ether's calm ! white finger-posts that point
To thee, Elysium ! fretted silver gates
Opening from outer worlds, blest seats, to ye !
How the soul leapeth up, to feel, to think,
'Tis no vain dream, but haply precious truth,
That God has hung yon Pleiad orbs on high,
Poised in the depths of his grand universe,
To guard and light thee, blessèd Eden-home !
How should those stars attract and charm us here,
Beyond all others ! ancient, hallowed lights !
Their office how transcendent, how august !
I view their tranquil beauty with strong love,
And passionate longing, and heaven-lifting awe.
Those stars seem distant Pisgahs looking o'er
God's happy promised Eden, reached not yet ;
We see their shining tops, shall pass them soon.

To push this clay aside—why fear? why shrink?
Then shall we mount, like flying thought, and haste
Up yon bright beams—the very beams that join,
With silvery bridges, our small world to them.
O scene beyond! no pen of fire can paint!
Dear paradise that fill'st our longing dreams!
Rest to the weary, balm-land to the soul,
Home of sweet meetings to long-severed hearts!
All soul can do while darkly journeying here,
Is still to pray, to hope, to sigh for thee.

THE IMMORTALS;
 OR,
 GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK IV.

CRIME shadows earth, and crime with hideous front
 May walk some worlds that hang most lovelily,
 Crowned with a glory, in the virgin sky,
 As nought impure could stain their radiant orbs.
 Virtue and vice must hold divided reign,
 And smiles and tears must chequer mortal lots,
 Till the weird ringers of eternity
 Sound out a knell—the knell of perished Time.

Justice exclaims, with stern, impartial voice,
 Be there a sphere of bliss, there too must gloom
 A place of woe for spirits steeped in guilt—
 Some dolorous, dim, and melancholy land,

Where Falsehood, Cruelty, and ruthless Hate,
Impiety, and Murder, shall sit down,
And wail in vain, and feel the gnawing tooth
Of keen remorse that ever eats their hearts ;
And weep, if spirits weep, hot tears in vain,
And stretch their hands to Mercy far away,
And curse the universe that goodness made,
And curse their dreary immortality.

What varied pictures ancient scholiasts draw
Of suffering souls, and that dark realm of pain !
Some threaten penal fire—ethereal fire ;
Not earth's gross element, for this could ne'er
Touch the fine spirit, which can glide thro' flame,
Live on the surface of the torrid sun,
And play with red-tongued lightning. Some would
place
Spirits within sealed caverns of the world,
And bind them for eternity in chains,
Not knowing their quick essence can pervade
Material things, and, unresisted, pass
Through the dull matter that might hedge them in.
Some have deemed fleshly tortures, such as work
Our living substance agony, will prove

The lot of the condemned in outer gloom ;
As if the screw, the rack, could pierce with pain
The subtile, airy spirit. Mind, 'tis mind !
There lies the sorrow of the dark undone,
There is the seat of pangs unspeakable ;
Mind is the rack, fire, torture—mind is hell.

But where, oh, where may this sad region be ?
Is it, as some have thought, around, above,
In the deep, beautiful, and tranquil sky,
Where walk the worlds in majesty, and float
The gold-wing'd angels?—What ! shall joy be near
Suffering and anguish ? must the blest still pass
Among the wretched, and behold their pangs,
Until they sorrow with the sorrowful,
And learn to weep amid their blessedness ?
Nay, ether's world-gemm'd region is not hell ;
'Tis all too calmly radiant, all too pure
For black impurity, too brightly full
Of sanctity for fallen, guilty souls,
And breathes, through all its holy, spangled depths,
Too much of loveliness, too much of God.

Then where that ebon-shored and doleful realm ?

No answer comes ; we only dare to dream
A God hath placed it far in outer depths,
Far from the beauty of glad-peopled worlds,
That no black shadow from those gulfs may fall
Across the eternal summer of the sky ;
No wail may reach to mar the music sweet
Of silver-chiming spheres and angel harps.
A realm, methinks, where utter darkness reigns,
Save when across the abyss wan gleams are cast
From the far worlds of cheerfulness and life,
And serve by edging faint the sable gloom,
To heighten desolation, and to throw
A deeper horror over horror's shades.

Heaven thus a barrier sets between bright worlds
And the sad dwellers of those drear domains ;
And save the first created, mightier souls,
Who fell from glory, and have power to range
Star-sprinkled space, none pass the appointed bound.
They gaze across the gulf, and faintly see
The worlds of light with choicest blessings crowned ;
They know what scenes of passing beauty grace
The favoured, sunny planets, once their home ;
How life goes on, and hope and love smile there ;

Hope that must never cheer those dark abodes,
Love that hath turned to fierce and fiery hate.
Then oft they mark angelic beings sweep
Far azure fields, on heaven's high missions bent ;
And they will watch them on their sparkling paths,
Winging tow'rd suns and beauteous planet-worlds,
Or rising gorgeous, like rich spires of light,
Up to the Central Paradise of God.
Thus gazing, sighing, reft of Mercy's smile,
Each pierced by torturing thoughts of vanished joy,
They battle with eternity and woe,
Yet heaven across the gulf still, still in view—
And this is mind's sharp suffering, spirit's hell.
But drop the veil, nor further seek to know ;
Pray rather, curious mortal, that thy soul,
Saved by Heaven's love and mercy, ne'er may find
That country's mournful shore ; but, pardon'd, pass
Death's sable flood to light, and peace, and joy.

A gathering of the Immortals. One vast course,
Since launched upon their bright, harmonious way,
The suns and planets had achieved in space,
Round the grand sun of suns—the Central World ;(*)
To celebrate this mighty finished year

Of God's great universe, the angels came :
They, the created, came to voice the praise
Of Him the Uncreate, Unborn, Unmade,
From whom all sprang, in whom all centering live,
Who, lord of matter, walketh on the stars,
As they were steps—high steps of ruby fire,
Piled up the infinite to glory's throne.

From pathless depths far-journeying myriads flew
From gorgeous constellations, where their eyes
Had peered into the beautiful and strange,
Spirits of knowledge gathered. Fields of life,
Burning in orbs that edge the Milky-Way,
Like drops of gold on Nature's flowing robe,
Sent guardian-angels in long glittering troops.
Seraphs of love were hurrying on the wing,
Their eyes all softness, and their hearts all flame ;
And grand Archangels, with their tranquil brows,
Moved, like new gods, among the humbler host—
Moved to the scene in radiance of their own,
Awful in dignity, as great in power,
Thoughtful vicegerents of Omnipotence.

O mighty concourse unconceived by clay !

Assemblage of the dazzling, holy, pure !
The universe of matter, dim, how dim,
To the proud universe of deathless mind !
No earthly image might set forth that scene
Of matchless splendour, blinding loveliness.
Number beyond all number, mocking thought !
The twilight mass of rustling forest-leaves
That shade a continent ; the sands that heap
Earth's ocean-shores, all counted into grains ;
These were as nought to that immense array
Met there in flashing glory. Angels crowned
With pristine power and virtue, foremost stood,
They who first sprang from nothingness to life,
Ne'er humbled by communion with our dust.
And myriads, shining myriads, grouped afar,
Some proudly thoughtful, others gently fair,
Some veiling radiance, some so purely bright,
They seemed but fashioned of white, burning beams.
Line followed line, on circle circle rose,
Far as the eye could sweep the space around,
Far as the eye could plunge in depths below,
Far as the eye might pierce the blue above.

Great mass of Spirit-essence ! boundless sea

Heaving with life, and foamed with restless wings,
Sweeping and melting in the infinite !
As sunset paves our ocean-tracts with gold,
A soft, red splendour lay upon that floor
Of outspread wings, and as they moved they flashed,
With every quiver, glories more intense.
Oh ! thinking, yearning, loving throng of souls !
And each undying bosom, in itself,
A heaven of aspiration, hope, and joy !

Dust may not syllable the mighty hymn
That swelled from harps and voices of the blest.
They sang the wonders of creative power,
When God from gulfs of darkness called each sun,
And bade light permeate all the veins of space.
They sang His love and mercy that went forth,
Like rivers to refresh the thirsting worlds ;
That summoned them to consciousness and bliss—
Sparks from the fire of His divinity ;
The love that fills the globes with joyous life,
And clothes the sides of every wandering orb
With flowers, sweet Nature's garments. Love that turns
Hot vengeance from the worlds where mortals err,
And sheds down blessings thick as morning dew ;

That giveth life to take it never more,
 Dowering each soul with wealth of endless days,
 And crowning Virtue with a fadeless wreath,
 Twined by the fingers of immortal joy.—
 “For this,” they cried, “beyond e’en power’s display,
 Thou great Triune! let all Creation lift
 Its voice in gratitude, and hymn thy praise!
 Sound it around this wide, wide Eden-home!
 Sound it in each vast sun, in each small orb!
 Sound it throughout the fields of luminous space!
 Through the unstarr’d abysses, to the verge
 Of sorrow’s hopeless, melancholy land!”

It closed—that strain of choiring cherubim,
 But still the notes swept floating through the blue,
 For quiverings e’en of feeble song on earth
 Cease not, though mortals may believe they cease,
 Thrilling deep space for ever. ⁽¹⁰⁾ That wide surge
 Of heavenly music reached the neighbouring globes,
 And their huge sides threw off vibrations soft:
 It passed Orion, murmuring through his belt,
 And lingered ’round Arcturus—brilliant world!
 And made his caverns vocal. Angels crossing
 The pearl-orbed Milky Way, that sweet wave met,
 And with acute perception drank the notes.

The fiend, emerging from the gloom, which spread
Blackening behind the farthest bank of stars,
Checked by the sounds seraphic, hung awhile
Floating on stirless wing. The music woke
Dreams of a sinless past, of peace and bliss,
And through that hope-abandoned, blasted soul,
Shot arrows of keen torture.

Swiftly flies

The thought-wing'd light; so sped the music-waves,
Till passing Saturn and enchanted Jove,
They quivered on our world. In many a vale,
Purple with flowers, on many a mountain-top
Kissed by the musky lips of wandering winds,
Angels, still bound to earth, that music heard :
Nought reached man's ear, but spirit's subtile sense
Caught every liquid sound and holy word.
They knew the ærial chant, the silvery tones
Which only lyres of seraphim could pour,
And, glowing with strong sympathy, they stood
Listening on tiptoe, shining arms outspread,
Their radiant faces tow'rd that distant world
Whence flowed the strains of sweetness, and their lips
Warbling in answer, on the rosy air,
The last linked words of that celestial song.

THE IMMORTALS;
 OR,
 GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK V.

WHILE through the depths that heavenly music floats,
 And the angelic crowds leave Eden-land,
 Powers, guardian-angels, governors of suns,
 Back hastening to the countless, distant worlds,
 We fain, with hesitating hand, would trace
 On poor humanity's dim, fleeting page,
 Some attributes of Him who fashioned each
 Immortal form, that glorious home of souls,
 Whatever lives, and feels, exults, and thinks—
 Great Architect of worlds, and lord of mind,
 Walking the skies, Proprietor of all.

O Thou who from the cloud-topped pyramid

Of lapsed eternity, look'st down on time
Sweeping its restless ages, our long past,
And our dark future's closely-curtained night,
To Thee one present!—Conqueror of space!
Unseen but felt thro' wide Creation's bounds;
On earth, and in yon distant pallid star,
At the same moment; moving mighty globes,
While passing gentle and harmonious laws,
By which the dew-drop rounds in Morning's eye;
Listening the chant of angels swelling forth,
Music that fills the immensity of heaven,
Yet hearing, in thy mercy, whispered prayer
From Virtue in her mud-walled cottage here—
O awful, yet benign, eternal King!
How can weak clay on earth's low platform placed,
The soul within its crumbling house of flesh,
Look up to Thee, and dimly hope to know
Thy hallowed nature, and high government?
What is our strength but frailty? what our years
But dew-beads sparkling on life's morning grass,
Only for time's hot sun to drink them up?
We soar, we hope, but conscious that the whole
Of Adam's race, and countless crowds that live
In yon star-systems powdering space with worlds,

Are in Thine eyes but as the insect-groups
That chirp in Summer's field. Yet, lord of Heaven!
Thy mercy equals thine omnipotence,
Thy love bright-crowning both, or this poor dust
Dared not to lisp the glories of Thy name,
Or wing a thought up such stupendous height,
To reach the footstool of thy majesty.

Eternity of being! how the soul
Staggers beneath the Atlantéan load
Of that o'erwhelming vision?—Prison'd here,
We strive in vain to grasp the limitless,
And from our ark of life send dreams abroad,
Like seeking doves, across the flood of years—
Seeking the olive-branch of deluged truth.
Reason can pierce not the Cimmerian gloom,
Palling the dark beginning of our globe,
How shall she then, torch-lighted, comprehend
That which did ne'er begin? Thought, searching
Thought!
The brute knows not, but angels share with man;
Thought passes reason in her power of flight;
We hail her as a swift, transcendent thing,
And now we send her, on strong eagle-plume,

Back o'er the gulf of great durations past,
To reach, if Thought can reach, the shadowy eld
Beyond the birth of time, when God alone
Looked out on shoreless space, and spake the word
In thunder—" I exist !"

Thought, fire-wing'd, flies,
Light's speed but tardy to her rushing course :
She hovers o'er the world, when chaos hushed
Its storms to calm, and Beauty's morning broke,
And man, new-formed, walked Eden's blissful shades,
Eve an embodied sunbeam at his side.
She trembles through the depths of epochs gone,
Periods we dare not mete ; when brutes immense
Roamed, the sole lords of forest-belted earth,
And the long mountain-ranges, towering now,
Were built by insects labouring in the sea ;
And continents—ay, every clod we tread
Was animate in turn with wondrous life.
Then Deity looked on, and calmly watched
The slow progression of Creation's wheels,
Rolling adown thy road, Eternity !

Again Thought starts upon her backward path ;

Beneath her spreads an incandescent world ;
Fearful the scene, yet Nature's God is there,
And binds the terror by unerring laws.—
Thought, still untired, doth urge her wondering way ;
She sees the earth, as sages well believe,
Diffused in primal elements through space ;*
A vapour unillumed, unformed, inert,
Ere the Almighty moved those waiting mists,
Breathed through their volume quick attraction's life,
And orb'd the sun, and framed its beauteous train
Of lighted and life-bearing planet-spheres.

Can the winged, heavenly sorceress deeper pierce
The abysses of the darkling, awful past ?
Feeble, and trembling, and exhausted now,

* The Mosaic cosmogony will harmonise with all that science intimates, as regards the immense antiquity of our planet, if we admit, as most divines now admit, that the first verse in Genesis allows an indefinite period to elapse between the beginning of all things, and the last re-moulding and beautifying of the earth, after those convulsions which preceded the human period. The Almighty's fiat could have produced, of course, every orb at once in perfect and finished beauty, but the geological history of our own globe plainly indicates that here, at least, He has been pleased to advance Nature to beauty and order slowly, step by step.

She looks abroad, and, in the infinite,
Beholds no lamp of light, no forming star,
For e'en Orion, ancient son of heaven,
And mighty Sirius, have not yet begun
To sound their chimings to the stately march
Of Time, the pilgrim-giant.—One more sweep,
She sees a column of bright angels flash,
At God's high word, to life and loveliness,
And hears the rush of quick-expanding wings,
And hears their new-raised voices ring through heaven.
Still backward, and no angels cheer the void ;
Silence, with blind Duration, darkly walks
The interminable, lifeless waste of sky ;
And yet not lifeless, Thou, O God ! art there,
Pervading all those worldless, ether-gulfs,
With secret power, and self-existent Mind,
And edging the wide wilderness of dark,
With uncreated, everlasting light.

Thus God's great Being goes for ever back,
Dateless, eterne, unborn, and underived,
Filling the depths e'en Thought must fail to plumb ;
Depths on the brink of which poor Wisdom faints,
And bows her head, and in despair expires.

Omnipotence—'tis Deity alone
Wields this great attribute. An angel's arm,
Though hurling lightning ; Satan's hellish might,
Though threatening worlds with ruin, are most frail,
Beside a power that, awful and unshared,
Admits no limit. Who shall image forth
The shadow of this substance ? catch one beam
Of this bright sun of all-compelling fire ?
Create—annihilate—what wonder there !
It passeth clay to grasp the mighty thought.
A whisper thrills the void—" Arise and shine !"
And worlds of light and glory sparkle out,
And hang stupendous in the embracing air ;
Worlds passing changes thro' a million years,
Till forests, flowers, and living creatures, spring
In beauty from dead dust, obeying laws
That down the ages ceaseless music make.
O soul-astounding power of Nature's lord !
Whose look lights up the dazzle of the sun,
Who reins the comet's wild fire-harness'd steeds,
Who guides each circling star, and in his hand
Holds the huge Nebulæ in outer space,
Yet stoopeth to regard frail dying man—
Stoopeth to paint the lily of the field,

And stretch his arm of kind protecting care
O'er the small, happy glowworm of the night.

All this o'erwhelms the finite, wondering mind,
And musing, proud Philosophy is dumb ;
But doubt not, though weak reason, staggering, reels ;
Did not such power exist, man ne'er had breathed,
No light had rained white beauty down the sky ;
Creation's chords would pour no dulcet notes ;
Space had no wandering spirits ; no grand worlds
Would sweep, with seas and mountains, 'round the sun,
But ancient Night had held eternal reign.

Omnipotence ! behold the earth we tread,
Mighty to us—to Thee a puny thing
Thy finger could arrest, thy breath blot out
From Glory's golden writing of the sky !
Protect it—guide it on its solar road !
Swathe it, Creation's babe, in fairest robes !
'Tis all unworthy thy peculiar love,
Yet bless it with thy brightest mercy-smile,
Through the far waiting ages, yet to sweep,
And billow o'er its beauty.—Father ! God !
Regard us lowly creatures of its dust—

Lowly, yet shrining a mysterious fire,
More durable than that whose brilliance streams
From flame-encircled suns ; the last may fade
To cold dead ashes, as hoar, darkening Time
Breathes winter through creation, but the soul,
The spirit-essence, brightening, drinketh still
Beams from the uncreated fount of beams,
Dews from the morning of eternity,
That still is morn, and never climbs to day,
Nor fears the shadow of a coming Eve.

Omnipotence ! blest power to mercy linked,
The pillar of the resting universe !
Oh ! what a solace to frail human hearts,
To turn from weakness, and repose on Thee !
To know, when stricken down by vaunting death,
Thine arm of might can lift the spirit up,
Unwrecked amid the wreck of crushing years ;
Can gather, too, the fragments of the frame,
Though all dissolved, and mingled with the sod,
Or scattered to the vagrant winds of heaven ;
Joining once more, to that remoulded clay,
The undying, thinking, memoried, blissful soul.

Can God be every where? the doubter cries;
And as he views the rock-ribbed, ancient hills,
And travels with his eye the boundless heavens,
Silent as death through all their gulfs of blue,
He marketh nothing palpable to sense,
That speaks the mighty Ruler's presence there.
Does God then fill these seeming empty depths,
This dumb infinitude?—he knows not how
A Being, though a spirit, can be here,
And in yon planet at the self-same hour,
Dividing thus the great eternal Mind,
And yet nor spent, nor weakened. Say, proud sage,
Dwell there not mysteries in the solid earth,
The dire volcano, the electric flash,
The ambient air, the palpitating sea,
And every painted flower that decks the Spring,
Thy reason cannot solve? then wherefore doubt?
Why disbelieve because frail, darkened soul
Can grasp not this exalted, wondrous truth—
God's ceaseless presence in his countless worlds?
Let Deity forsake our smiling globe,
Guiding no more Creation's rushing wheels,
Those wheels would stop, and Beauty ne'er again
Bare her white bosom to the universe;

Melodious Order would unstring her lyre ;
While Ruin, with a loose, ungoverned rein,
Would lash his steeds, and drive his iron car,
Mid desolated worlds, till Chaos sat
Lord of infinitude, and not a God.

Mortal ! survey yon sun—consider well
Its strong attractive power diffused through space,
Unseen, yet every where, pervading globes,
Drawing, supporting, and controlling all—
Behold resemblance here, though weak and faint,
To God's great presence, like an influence, spread
Through all the realms of matter and of life—
A searching presence nothing can escape,
Filling high heaven, while reaching humble earth,
Voiced by the thunder, whispered by the breeze,
Glassed on the ocean, and impressed on flowers ;
In widest spaces, and in narrowest homes,
Amidst the angels in far, dazzling depths—
Cathedrals of the ancient, holy sky—
And in the dungeon where no sun can shine,
And Woe her galling fetters bathes with tears.

The grateful Seasons, in their varied round,

Proclaim in music some supporting power
Presiding o'er their changes. Doth not Spring
Don her green forest-robcs, and on her hair
Mount her bright diadem of jewel-flowers,
And walk rejoicing the dew'd mountain-tops,
Because Divinity's reviving smile
Is glowing on the world?—Warm Summer faints,
But all her rills in coolest crystal run,
And all her woods their gayest livery wear,
And all her birds sing happy jubilee,
As conscious God is near to bless his works.
Bland Autumn, with her bounteous, mellow store,
Sits on the russet steep, and joyous shakes
Her tresses o'er the plains of ripened gold,
And, with a rich-voiced eloquence, attests
The Giver of all good is present there.
E'en Winter, with his gelid, torpid streams,
And feathery snows that cloak the shivering waste,
Each tree a skeleton, gay flowers in dust,
Cries, God alone could plan such happy rest
For worn Creation's heart, His tireless care,
And fostering spirit, watching all the scene.

Wide Nature too, through all her conscious bounds,

Thrilling, exultant, weareth for her God
Aspects sublime, or brightly beautiful.
It is not fancy that proud Ocean spreads
Its azure bosom to the bending sky,
And sounds its trumpet of hoarse-booming waves,
Its everlasting trumpet blown by storms,
In praise of its Creator—fruitless praise,
If that pervading Spirit were not near,
Nor heeded its resounding, billowy hymn,
Nor gazed, well-pleased, upon its mighty face.
The valley, like a dimple, laughs on earth,
Or, stealing out from shadow, coyly ope
Its many-coloured mantle to the sun—
Mantle wove deftly by the cunning hand
Of Nature, sweet embroiderer, all inlaid
With golden flowers, and edged with silver rills.
The living forest clothes the mountain's slope,
Crowns the rough crag with beauty, and makes green
The horror of the dizzy precipice—
These put on loveliness, and solemn pomp,
Beneath the wide-beholding eye of God.
River, and rill, bright lake, and heathy steep,
Reflect the smiles He sheds upon our world ;
And if Divinity can draw a joy,

And angels joy, from such enchanting scenes,
Shall He not bless them still, and still be there ?

When sunset, with warm waves of glory, floods
The Western ridges, and darts scarlet lines
From a hot centre, out on every side,
And, beautifully artful, hangs with fringe,
Torridly brilliant, every nearer cloud,
And every far one tips with orange light,
And turns the greenest groves, the bluest streams,
To waving amber, and to running flame,
Earth, heaven, the while, one blended, grand display
Of indescribable and crimson pomp ;
None but a God from light's pure fount could call
Such hues of wondrous splendour—hues that spread
For Nature's lord their gorgeous paradise ;
And all the West seems conscious, with its wealth
Of opals, rubies, and its melted gold,
That Deity, though present in all worlds,
Now, with peculiar glory, walks our own.

But wait Night's solemn coming ; mark yon dome,
To human vision built above our globe,
Adorned with chequer-work of palest gems ;

There science sees one boundless field of life,
Of glowing matter, and of active mind.
Do not yon moving, multitudinous hosts,
Like seraphs with their harps, whose strings are fire,
Pour thro' the liquid calm a holy hymn
To Deity who treads the azure paths,
Around them and among them?—Feel they not,
In all their luminous and wide-spread choir,
A rapture at His presence, lighting up
Their lamps of silver, quenchless, soft and pure,
To grace the hallowed festival of Him,
The eternal Bridegroom of the Universe?
Whose glory, flashing through the skyey halls,
Illumes, and is reflected from their brows,
Himself ubiquity, Himself their life,
Himself distinct, yet every where diffused,
Ruling their spangled legions evermore.

The closing Attribute that lifteth high,
And crowns with splendor e'en Divinity,
Amid whose rays all others shrink and pale,
As stars, though still existent, flee before
The bright, ascending sun; an attribute

That yields to earth all blessings earth can crave,
And smiles on all existence in all worlds,
But chiefly pours warm showers of mercy down
On that waste wilderness—the heart of man ;
This Attribute—this holy, issuing fire,
Which burns, but ne'er consumes, is boundless love !

There are who, narrow'd by a narrow creed,
View all things through a cloud of sullen gloom,
Till beauty grows deformity, and light
Seems darkness to their mental jaundiced eye.
Mistaking Heaven's high Record breathing hope,
And Christ's pure, gentle teachings full of love,
They image God a stern, remorseless king,
Who, frowning on the universe He made,
Permitteth evil to prevail o'er good.—
Come, pale-eyed trembler ! who dost shrink and
mourn,
Deeming it true philosophy to sigh ;
O come, and ponder well God's beauteous works,
Love's emanations, and reflecting full
The Eternal Mind in their unerring glass—
And say if thou canst read, imprinted there
Terror, and wrath, and dire austerity ;

And say if man must bend in abject dread,
Weave 'round his spirit, like the reptile worm,
A web of torpid gloom, and hug despair.

A Summer landscape—'mid the hush of noon
Sunshine is clothing, with a vest of beams,
Listless, reposing Nature ; quiet's spell
Soothes her great heart, as though it scarcely beat,
Full of luxurious, dreamy happiness.
Deepening that quiet, softest rustlings float
From the near forest's dark-green, twinkling leaves ;
You hear the drip of rills that slide and play
From stone to stone, adown the mountain's side,
Scattering themselves in foam through very joy,
And eager haste to reach the glen below,
To kiss the waiting flowers ; while sleepy birds
Low chirp in shady coverts, and the bees
Hum slumbrous music-language, as they drowse
From flower to flower, and sip their nectar-wine.
Nature, all living things, seem wed to bliss,
Half fainting with the happiness they feel :
And e'en the clouds that whitely fleck the blue,
Linger, entranced and calm, above the hills,
As if they shared the general peace and joy.

'Tis here conviction presses on the soul
That no malignant, no stern, cruel power
Doth sway the jewelled sceptre of the world ;
But earth and heaven, through all their width and depth,
Cry with a trumpet-voice, high-raised and sweet,
That God is love, surveys His works in love,
He the one mighty circle drawn 'round all,
And that one circle strong-embracing love.

No scene, no creature, spite of partial ill,
But shares the great Creator's wide-spread smile :
E'en deserts have their riches in the well,
The camel and the palm ; volcanoes' sides
Are decked with flowers, and purple with the grape ;
The South holds luxury's horn ; the North can yield
A wild, rough pleasure to its shivering tribes ;
The Aurora lights them, and the rein-deer sweeps,
Wafting them like swift spirits. All that man
Can well desire, he grasps on this rich globe ;
All he deems good and fair, kind Heaven supplies,
And e'en for his diseases Art can find
A cure provided in the strengthening spring,
Or generous, healing plant. The wildest beast,
The timid bird, the insect, and the worm,

The finny darter of the watery depths—
Each is provision'd, guarded, each enjoys,
Through bounteous providence, its gift of life—
Is this an angry monarch's vengeful plan,
Breathing a blast of evil 'round the world?
Or kindness of a God who rules in love?

Man from his birth-hour yields unceasing proof
Of heaven's benevolence, and watchful care;
Ay, every portion of his wondrous frame,
The agile limb, the fine-drawn, mystic nerve,
Each sense conveying to the prisoned mind
The outer glory of material things—
Fair shape, sweet sounds, the countless hues of flowers,
And the rich changing world of woven light,
With all the pictures of magnificence,
The grand, the lovely, painted on the brain;
These, like a holy chant of being, rise,
Whose burden is God's love—a love that framed
A mortal creature wonderful as man.

What guards the infant in its helpless hour,
That frailest blossom on the tree of life?
What yieldeth strength to manhood, that his arm

May garner in the fruits of affluent earth,
And shield the beings dear unto his heart ?
And, oh, when age makes frail the stalwart limb,
Dropping its snows upon the stooping head,
What cheers the sinking sense, and sheddeth light
Deep in the soul as dimmer grows the sun,
Breathing meek resignation's hallowed calm ?
'Tis God's supporting, never-failing love.
Like a soft balmy wind, or fruitful rain,
Designed for all, His bounty gladdens earth.
On every side is love—each height, each depth,
From grand archangels to weak, dying man,
From man to motes that sport in Summer's beam,
His mighty love o'ershadows, blesses all.
E'en pains and woes afflict us, but to wean
The heart too fondly clinging to the world ;
And death we shrink from, as a cruel law,
Ending all pleasure, is by love designed
The bridge to pass our spirits o'er the flood,
The tossing flood of stormy, changeful time ;
The opening door to let out waiting soul,
So she may issue from close darkness here,
To walk the sunny paradise of God.

THE IMMORTALS;
OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK VI.

OF all the forms of loveliness that move
Beside the streams of life, or wreath their hair
With amaranths blooming in Elysian vales,
No spirit equals in pure, touching grace,
The soft-eyed angel, Mercy. Where on earth
Might searcher find 'mid all that charms our gaze,
Aught so enchanting, bright, and beautiful,
As that ethereal and love-beaming face?
Aught throning mind like that high, pensive brow?
Aught full of pathos as those yearning eyes,
That turn from dazzling joy to seek distress,
And weep for others' woe?—Her parted lips,
Her very wings, while resting by her side,

Though silent, seem to breathe heart-language sweet,
And tremble with deep feeling. Like that tree.
Low stooping in our world, when feet approach,*
She bends all sensitive at Sorrow's step;
And sighs will shake her nature, as the wind
Doth rock the aspen's cradle of thick leaves :
Yet Mercy is not sad, but flushed with hope ;
Pillowed on lofty trust, she feels a joy
E'en in her seeming grief, and stands in heaven
The beautiful, the courted, and the loved,
A sunny iris round her golden head.

And what bright Mercy's office ? through the worlds
She speeds at large, and bears heaven's gifts of love ;
To God, though merciful, she still would plead,
That crime may pardon find. She stoops and weeps
Above the two-edged sword that Justice draws,
And prays it may not fall. 'Tis hers to fly
From system unto system, race to race,
Seeking where darkness, wrong, and misery dwell,
Mourning for suffering, melting over woe,
Then, gravating on her heart, as some blest page,

* A species of Mimosa found in Arabia.

The gentler history of humanity,
She bears the touching record back to heaven,
Drawing from eyes celestial pitying tears.

'Twas now her task to visit a small star
Hung near its sun, far down the Milky-Way—
An humble world, and lost to common gaze,
Among the loftier systems, mightier globes,
That crowd life-teeming space ; a little sphere,
That, like a fire-fly, humm'd its shining course
Amidst the gorgeous woods of countless worlds ;
Great to the boastful beings it contained,
But Oh, a speck of dust upon the robe
Of vast Creation—dust if swept away,
No heaven-wide gazer would its absence mark :
A world, though seeming old, of briefest date
Beside the Pleiad glories, or the globes
Circling gigantic Sirius ; yet a world
Favoured of God—a spot most bright and fair,
A blooming garden in the waste of sky,
The choicest flower in Nature's varied wreath—
A land where centering met all beauty, grace,
All the sublimities and forms of life,
Scattered through other spheres ; as if a lens

The Spirit of Creation o'er it held,
Gathering each matchless feature, burning, there.

It was a world where angels, gliding down
The skyey road, oft loved to light and rest ;
For streams more purely ran, and valleys spread
With richer verdure, in that distant globe.
Who loveth God, loves all His beauteous works ;
For what is beauty on wide Nature stamp'd,
But well-pleas'd Deity's embodied smile ?
So angels gloried in that favoured Earth,
And only marvelled Man was dull and blind ;
That he, begirt by choicest sights and sounds,
And cheered by hopes of immortality,
Went sighing o'er its surface. Mole-like man !
Closing his eyes on truth's broad-shining sun,
And burrowing under ground in error's dark,
The outer universe, the spirit-sphere,
All unregarded, nothing to his soul.
Oh, well might Mercy long to visit Earth !
Well might her pitying spirit mourn to see
Those canker spots on Being's lovely flower,
And ask to sweep them out ! her soul would dwell
On Nature's beauty and man's sorrows here,

Soothe where she could not heal, and pray a God
To banish ill's dark train from world so fair.

The sun wheeled near the horizon's glimmering brim,
Not lifting yet his forehead hot and flushed,
To shine down India's valley, when, beam-crowned,
Mercy alighted on high Himmaleh.
The lofty mount she trod was fluttering soft
With Morning's rosy fire, but still its feet
Lay in thick shadow, like a dying saint,
Half lingering in the world, and half in heaven.

The Angel gazed, and as she gazed, what change
Flashed upon Nature!—Up the Day-god sprang,
And wide Creation, startled by his eye,
Flung off her leaden slumbers. Every hill
Arose rejoicing, like a tower of beams,
And every tree, where waking birds piped out,
Seemed as a lyre soft-touched by harpist Morn,
Ringing with fairy music; white cascades,
Leaping from gloom, like happy captives freed,
Answered amid their wild and foamy joy,
Bass to the silver treble of the rills.
A living freshness breathed from out the lips

Of ancient Earth, and steeped the crystal sky ;
As if great Nature's youth, with opening light,
Came back once more in tender gloriousness,
Giving to all things grandeur's, beauty's spell,
Embracing all things in its glowing arms.

From Northern hills the angel glided South,
Then floated thoughtfully on winnowing wings.
Oh ! what a land of wonders charmed her gaze,
Her keen eye gathering all the landscape in,
From tree'd Cabool to Coromandel's shore !
She traced that mighty king of worshipped waves,
Ganges that proudly trails his tawny length,
Watering a continent of palms and flowers.
She saw the Brahmin 'neath that holy tree,
The wide-spread Banian by Nerbudda's tide,
Musing, as mused his sires ere Christ was born.
She saw the twilight woods that Eastward sweep—
Forests unpruned since Earth was clad in green,
Where roamed the elephant, the lord of brutes,
Lacking but reason's force to equal man.
She tracked, with eyes refreshed, the long rich plains
Of famed Bahàr, where Nature from her horn
Scatters her wealth of flowers, and luscious fruits.

In many a stream, and sky-pure fount, she saw,
With piercing vision, grains of richest gold,
And every precious gem by Beauty prized :
While oft pagodas towered 'mid cypress groves,
Their burnished points thrown up, in Morning's beam,
Like hopes that flash o'er grief. Then swept her eye
Down the long coast with tufted cocoas fringed,
Where proud old Ocean, a strong giant, lay
Guarding this hoary land of ancient fame,
Sounding an anthem at its royal gates,
Proclaiming Ind the favourite of the sun,
Wealth's tiar'd queen, the orient paradise.

Alas ! this land so sumptuous and so rich,
'Tis but a dazzling sepulchre of soul,
Where wisdom, truth, and virtue, corpses lie.
The sun is radiant in rejoicing heaven,
But starless midnight black on spirit rests.
See the grim monster, Superstition, stalk,
With iron hoof, and glittering, ghastly eye !
His foul touch numbs, his pestilential breath
Withers up sickening soul. Dark age on age,
His fiery march hath crushed the Hindoo world.
Ye hideous rites of Siva ! well might shame

Cover with fire her forehead's taintless white,
And momentary sorrow, with sharp pang,
Touch her celestial nature. Oh! to see
Souls meant to soar, advance in wisdom's walks,
So sunk, debased, so crime-enthralled and lost,
Dragging, degraded, error's clanking chains,
God's image from their natures all erased—
Wonder and horror thrilled her anguished heart ;
She could not sigh, or vent her grief in tears,
But, mounting from the sad and ghastly scene,
Leant on a silvery cloud, and, arms outstretched,
Prayed there, as fervid angels only pray,
That Satan's legions might resign their reign
O'er prostrate spirits they had swayed so long ;
That Mind would light her torch, and Truth unscale
The eyes of Error in this Pagan world ;
That happiness and virtue might descend,
And strew sweet flowers where coiled the scorpion,
 crime,
And richest Ind be poor in soul no more.

Not ours to trace that angel's varied flight
O'er Tropic Isles, where man, the savage still,
Turns Eden into hell ; to mark her course

Through wide Cathay,* that strange and wondrous land,
That garden rich, that busy hive of souls,
But where black Cruelty digs million graves.
Many a broad waste, and cloud-topped mountain peak,
And many a river's blue meandering wave,
Her wings went silvering o'er. Cashmere's bright lakes,
And bowers of roses stocked with nightingales,
Whose ceaseless songs, so mellow, clear, and pure,
Woke, by their touching sweetness, sweeter thoughts
Of younger angels' hymns in distant heaven :
Proud citted Persia, old historic land,
Where the bald pillars of Persepolis,
Like spirits naked and most desolate,
Shivering expectant on the Stygian shore,
Gleamed whitely in the moon ; these met her gaze ;
She passed Chaldæa's plain, Power's earliest seat,
Whererude green mounds, and broken sculptured stones,
And stunted shrubs which hid the jackal's brood,
Were all that greedy Desolation showed
Of earth's primeval cities. Phantoms stalked
Around the ruined tower which Belus reared,
By lightnings blasted ; and hyenas prowled
Where shone the courts of Babylonian Kings.

* China.

But rivers wandered, affluent as they gushed
When watering paradise, and Eve beheld,
In their smooth glass, her new-created face.
Not now, along their banks, the Angel saw
Man, beautiful and sinless, walk in peace ;
Not now fruit-laden trees, and spangled groves,
And beds of flowers, whose richness mocked the West,
When Day melts all his clouds to flames and gold ;
Not now the music of flute-throated birds
Swelled with rich odours up the balmy sky ;
But where bloomed Eden, grew the prickly thorn,
Where Eve looked love, the scaly adder hissed ;
For music she but heard the bittern's cry,
So wildly shrill, monotonously sad.
Ruin and Solitude, with scythe-armed Death,
Exultant walked the scene once bless'd by God—
The scene of glory crime had made a grave.
What murmur trembled down the desert air,
Most gentle, sweet, but full of hopeless grief ?
'Twas musing Mercy's sad, regretful sigh.

Steep followed steep, as swift her pinions spurned
The floating fragrance of Assyrian skies ;
And now she paused, constrained by some strong spell,

And gazed from upper air. • An ancient land,
 Full of hoar tombs, with holy memories linked,
 Beneath her spread. The scene was solemn, fair,
 Yet breathed intensest sorrow : not a hill,
 A glen, a stream, but told its by-gone tale ;
 And not a ruin garmented with moss,
 But midst its desolation pleading looked,
 And spake as with a trumpet, silver-toned,
 Of mighty seers, of miracles and heaven ;
 While passed like ghosts that still would haunt the spot—
 Ghosts the dark sorcerer-ages failed to lay—
 Religion, Power, and Glory.—Peopled earth !
 And earth sublime with Andes and with Alps !
 And beautiful with green Ausonian vales,
 And solemn with old Egypt, crumbling Rome !
 Nought canst thou show entralling fervid hearts,
 Prompting high visions, flooding all the soul
 With sacred sorrow yet with grateful love,
 Leading man's thoughtful nature up to God,
 Like sad, deserted, ruined Palestine !

From blasted rocks by Sodom's bitter lake,
 To Bashan's valleys, and the live-green slopes
 Of cedar'd Lebanon, the angel gazed.

Though joy and plenty long had fled the land,
Their foot-prints lingered still in many a vale,
That woo'd them back with bloomy vines and flowers,
And would they come no more? was hope e'en dead?
No, like the sun-god, hope had smiled farewell,
Gone sorrowing down behind the hills of woe,
But while her broad, grand orb thus veiled its rays,
Her glimmering twilight lit the mournful scene.

The Spirit knew, from records kept in heaven,
The deathless history of each hallowed spot,
And thrilled while gazing there. Tiberias' lake
Shone like a streak of sky betwixt the hills :
Tabor, green-clothed with freshly-rustling woods,
Looked like a gorgeous emerald set in earth,
While on its summit birds, surviving man,
Piped jubilean song. Esdraelon spread,
Rich with young flowers, her bosom to the sky,
A bride of beauty that ne'er waxeth old,
And loved untiring by her bridegroom sun,
That draws such fragrance from her heart of sweets
The bees, those busy children of the beam,
Knowing no rebels in their happy realms,
Humm'd faintly in the drowsy, luscious noon,

Where bloomed, warm Nazareth, thy garden beds ;
While eagles shrieked their piercing, dolorous notes,
Along Gilboa's haunted, desert hills,
Where Saul despaired and died. The angel's eye
Followed entranced Samaria's verdurous steeps,
Billowing with trees, and white with cottage homes.
Charmed she beheld green Shechem's long-drawn vale,
Noisy with infant rills, that babbled sweet,
And, babbling, wept through moss their diamond tears ;
She saw dewed Hermon's tops, and, Eastward far,
Pouring from urns whose riches never fail,
Wandering through palms, and reeds, and banks of shade,
The living genius of the dying land,
Breathing in every whisper tales of heaven—
Immortal Jordan—earth's most holy stream.

Ye lingering glories ! how the musing heart
Clings to these scenes—religion's hallowed haunts !
How they seem linked to heaven ! as if blest hands
Let down a shining ladder from the skies,
That angels might descend and speak with man.

But Mercy turned ; she saw the fiery curse
Stamped on Judæa's hills ; there Grandeur throws,

Robed in dark sackcloth, ashes on her head,
And Power sits sepulchred in voiceless caves,
With the dead millions in Jehoshaphat.—
Mourn, Spirit, mourn, for Salem, the uncrowned !
The Mother of dead Kings who left no heirs ;
The mummied corpse of Glory, whose prond soul
Passed with the flaming Temple from the world.
City of Solomon ! whose brazen gates,
And battled turrets, laughed each foe to scorn ;
Where Sheba's queen, though nursed in luxury's lap
Fainted for envy of the sumptuous scenes :
What art thou now ? a city lit alone
By Memory's star—the present, night, black night.
A voice from thy deep heart calls low and sad,
Like a pale widow's wail. Wide ruin sweeps,
A dull Dead-Sea o'er all thy buried pride.
Men desecrate thy holy hills ; thy shrine
Can boast no stone to speak its ancient fame.
Along thy streets where kings and warriors stalked,
The Moslem tramples on the crouching Jew,
Deriding while he loathes him. Would thou wert
A ruin plaining to the crannyng winds,
Thy walls and towers with mourning ivy hung,
And owls thine only tenants ! Then the soul

Might sympathise more truly with thy woes,
And cling to thee, the desolate of years,
With an exalted and a hallowed love.

A hushed, white form, as Evening's shadows fell,
Bowed upon Zion's hill ; her face was sad ;
She felt the desolation darkening 'round,
Black as a funeral pall o'er all the scene.
Deep pity moved that gentle angel's soul ;
She veiled her features with her closing wings,
And bending low, more low, her falling hair
Hid her clasped hands, and touched the rugged rocks.
For Salem and her sorrows ; for a land
Passed to the Pagan ; for the humbled sons
Of seers, and prophets, and immortal kings,
Merey would supplicate offended heaven.
Radiant with feeling, beautiful she looked
To other spirits, met dejected there ;
They grouped in circles 'round that shining form,
Like silvery haze which belts a glorious star ;
And lifting to blue heaven their bluer eyes,
Their bosoms swelling with a tender grief,
They mingled lamentations with her own,
And wept sad tears for Salem's bitter doom.

THE IMMORTALS;
 OR,
 GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK VII.

Who doth not love the beautiful, the fair?
 What gazer is not ravished, when Stambool
 First blazes on his sight? Sure Nature curved
 Those beauteous shores for Ocean's lips to kiss,
 Murmuring sea-music 'tween two Continents;
 Sure Nature formed the headland's purple front,
 And reared behind the theatre of hills,
 With fond design that man should fashion there
 The gem of earthly cities.

'Tis most sweet
 To view Stambool, when o'er the Asian height

Morn's rose-wreathed goddess walks, and flings abroad
Crowns of dew-pearls for happy fairy heads,
And, heavenly sower, handfuls of bright beams,
And, building high her ruby orient arch,
Looks from beneath it laughing at the West,
Till the rich sparklings of her smiles illumine
Marm'ra's glassed wave, while all the rocks and hills
Seem wrought to brilliance by her flashing eyes ;
Then Mosque's gilt dome, and minaret, gleam out,
Like gold rough beaten, and the muezzin's call
To early worship, sweet to faithful ears,
Swells musically down the glowing air ;
And breezes from the Euxine waft new life
And vigour on their wings, and softly bring,
From flowers imparadising Thracian plains,
The rich ethereal spirit of perfume ;
While streamy, wooded dells, that all the night
Had wept in silence, suddenly lit up
By joyous beams, forget their tearful grief,
And sound thro' all their depths with chant of birds.

The dreamer, too, who calmest beauty loves,
And the rapt Artist who on colour feeds,
Will view the scene entranced, when Evening comes,

And by her cunning, magic masonry,
Doth tessellate, with burning, crimson ore,
That narrow severing billow; then a path
The smooth wave shines between the poplar'd banks,
Meet to be trod by Peris' glancing feet.
The sloping gardens, opening to the sea,
Bask many-coloured in the sun's farewell.
The yew and cypress, Nature's mutes, that watch
The sleeping dead, at solemn Scutari,
Gleam green and gold, as varied shafts of light
The archer sun shoots warmly through their depths;
And the tall turban'd stones, where mourners weep,
Resign their ghostly white, and, tipp'd with fire,
Look burning finger-posts that point from time
And troubles here, to calm eternal days.
The Asian hills gaze shadowy from the East,
Growing for envy momentarily more pale,
At the rich splendors mantling Europe's shores,
Where the bright queen of colour, dropt from heaven,
Stands in her flaming robes on Hæmus' top,*
And with her dainty brush paints land and sea,
Till clouds float rubies, rocks glow hot with gold,

* Mount Hæmus, the modern Balkan.

Forests hang burnished, streams look running wine ;
And, flushed with crimson, like a maid in dreams,
The Sultan's city her siesta takes,
Too beautiful to move, or sigh, or wake.

But Mercy's angel passed ; mysterious heaven !
In spot like this can direst evil reign ?
Hath loveliness no spell to charm away
Invidious, cruel death ? The angel saw,
And shuddered though immortal—saw a shape
More hideous than e'er shocked her cowering gaze,
E'en on the confines of dark Satan's realms.
Fiends may tower nobly, and, amid their crimes,
Look grandly beautiful, but here a dream
Of nightmare-horror, and of spectral fear,
That haunteth oft the slumbering murderer's brain,
Seemed to have leaped to black malignant life.
It hovered o'er that scene of wondrous grace,
And stretched with rancorous threat its livid arms,
And from blue lips breathed poison on the air :
Fixing its withering eyes on bright Stamboul,
It launched its flame-tipp'd arrows far and wide,
Each arrow piercing some doomed human heart—
And such was Earth's fell scourger—deadly Plague.

While Nature's face wore smiles, the face of man
Spoke anxious terror; and while breezes kissed,
With lips invisible of purest balm,
The flowers to bloomier life, and beast and bird
Rejoiced around, man sank, and moaned, and died.
Dark destiny! perplexing law of heaven!
Reason's proud sons must agonise, and meet
A double death—the real, and its fear;
But soulless brutes, in this supremely blest,
Pass without dread, unconscious, to their doom.

Poor pitying Spirit! how she moved along
The tainted streets, and glided to the sides
Of suffering mortals in their last sad hour!
Each pang they felt, she felt; with viewless hands
She soothed the couch of weak and fainting age,
And crowned with smiles the terror of the tomb.
Like a rich rainbow o'er a bed of flowers,
She spread her wings o'er dying infancy,
And opened to its pure and sinless soul,
Ere it had quite escaped the feeble frame,
Glimpses of glory, vistas leading up
The starry heights to God's bright paradise.
She brought cool airs to fever's throbbing brow,

Hushed the sad sighs of new-made orphan hearts,
And sweetly cheered with hope the dying bride,
Whispering to inner sense supporting words—
How love's dear tie, unbroken by strong death,
Would bind pure spirits through eternal years.
The mournful boats that bore their freight of dead,
To sleep on Asia's shore,* she followed slow,
And watched the hurried burials by the moon,
And to the wailing mourners whispered peace;
While virtuous souls just freed from bonds of clay,
She gently raised above the mists of earth,
Speeding their flight to joy's celestial land.

“ Great lord of life, and Governor of worlds !”
Sighed the sad Angel ; “ thus Thy judgments fall
On man's poor race, so noble yet so mean,
So formed for virtue, yet so bound by crime.
The demons for awhile prevail below,
Dispensing death and agony, to prove
How lost, how friendless, mortals without Thee,
How happiness and good all flow from Thee,
How heaven and earth should love—but Thee, but
Thee !”

* At the great Turkish cemetery near Scutari.

Wide was the parched and dreary desert land,
O'er which the angel now slow shaped her way—
A land where fell the fire of cloudless suns,
As if God's eye in hot and deadly wrath,
Withering, and never closed in pardoning love,
Flashed on that hapless country. 'Twas a land
Whose central depths man's foot had rarely trod;
And when some bold adventurer, toiling long,
Dragged him to that forbidden solitude,
It was his wont, beneath the brassy sky,
To faint and sink, and leave his untombed bones
To whiten on the waste. The home of Ham,
Once covered by the wide-engulfing wave,
In some past epoch awful and unknown:
Country of lions, pestilence, and snakes,
Where Man so far hath fallen from the type
Of human beauty, born in paradise,
That doubters seek another well of life
Whence flows so strange a stream: this land remains
A mystery, and a melancholy fear,
Its river-veins that wander thro' hot sands,
Haunted by savage tribes that nothing know
Of science, art, of progress, or a God.
Yes, Afric, save where Mind, with partial light,

Illumes its borders, like intensest fire
Fringing the blackness of a thunder-cloud,
Lies dark and lost, as curs'd for evermore.

She crossed this sea-like desert, dotted rare
With palmy Isles ; so virtue blooms by stealth
In the sad waste of our crime-tainted world.
Oft boomed upon the breeze, terrific, dread,
The prowling lion's roar ; anon she flew
O'er some barbaric city, and beheld
Chiefs clad in skins, and monarchs crowned with shells.
But now she paused to bless one lonely form—
A man of solemn mien and hopeful eye ;
Musing he trod the sands, then, halting, sat
Beneath a shadowy palm, and conn'd the page,
The Hebrew's legacy to favored Earth.
Home he had left, and friends, and happier climes,
And courted danger, toil, starvation, death,
From love to human kind. He wandered here,
Bringing truth's Morn to error's sable Night,
Bearing from tribe to tribe religion's torch.
"Speed thee! God's chosen child! pursue thy course!"
Whispered the Angel, as she stooped more near.
"For sacrifice like this—for deeds like thine,

Above the holy great ones shalt thou rank,
On yon celestial shore. Thy crown shall be
Of flowers more bright than deck the seraph's hair,
Plucked from Eternity's unfading hills ;
And thou shalt walk, for deserts, heaven's starr'd floor,
Its halls of sapphire, and its amaranth vales,
For ever honored midst the honored there."

The angel, mounting skyward, steadfast kept
Her vision on the westering, flaming sun,
And followed, comet-like, his crimson course ;
And now the mighty, wide-resounding sea
Burst, in its freshened glory, on her sight.

She leant upon the rocks, and cast her eyes
Across the blue immensity. That soul,
Lofty, immortal, who had roamed the worlds,
Far stellar systems, vast as beautiful,
Saw something noble and exalted here,
Something as grand, and imaging a God,
As lives in all Creation's boundless range.

Thou Ocean ! we do call thee old and hoar,
Yet thy wild power, thy freshness, still display

All, all the bounding energy of youth.
We look on thee, a world in thy great self;
From coral insect-tribes to mighty whales,
What myriads people thy blue wilderness !
How many of our race beneath thy foam
Have found cold sepulchres, the pitiless surge
Tolling, for ever tolling their deep knell !
Friends cannot on their tombs write epitaphs
Yes, all must lie unmonumented there.
We hail thy restless, ever-rolling waves,
As something with mysterious life endowed,
Heaving and throbbing 'round the conscious world.
Thou callest, with a voice of rageful storms,
Out to the sky that hears thy loud complaint ;
And with the solemn thunder dost thou talk,
Thy words the sounding billows. Still thy heart
Beats, beats, within that fathomless abyss ;
And when calms smooth thy wrath to gentleness,
Thy giant arms are stretched abroad to God,
And thy deep prayers in softest whispers rise.

O Sea ! when cradled in thy hollow caves,
Or shining, glossy-bright, beneath the moon,
Bearing the soul away on wings of awe,

Thou, like the unpillar'd sky above thee arched,
Unchanged, through ever-changing, wasting years,
Dost seem, despite thy majesty and power,
A melancholy thing. Thy sobbing surge,
Monotonous, wild-plunging, rolling on,
Lapping among the rocks, and breaking white
On shingle and on sand for ever, ever,
Sounded, when sorrowing Eve bewailed her fall,
And when the last man dies, it still will sound,
Heard by the Judgment-angel in the clouds.—
Thus face to face with God's sublimest work,
We own no pride beside the humbling sea,
But shrink into ourselves, and feel how great
That Power above, whose faintly-spoken word
Created and upholds yon world of waves.

The wind was fair, and heaven and ocean smiled,
As proudly bore from land the stately ship.
Her sails all spread, and white as virtue's soul,
She yielded easy to the easy gale,
And moved in grace and beauty o'er the main.
Oh, who might dream that vessel, gliding on,
A thing so gay and gallant, held within
A crowd of hearts, whose every fiery beat

Seemed as a pulse of torture, countless eyes
Upraised to heaven, mad anguish in their glare?

The wave was tranquil, and no human sense
Might catch a groan on lightly-fluttering winds,
As swept the bark to sea; yet not a sigh
Escaped one wretch's bosom, but it reached
The Angel's ear, in quivering up to God.
Mirth on the deck, and pleasing dreams of gain—
Below sad tears, and wailings of despair,
And fever's madness in that burning den,
While still the lash was plied to hush their cries—
Torture to stifle torture—body's pains
To crush out spirit's. Poor immortal ones!
Sprung from one parent with their tyrant lords,
Yet ranked and bartered with the soulless brute.
O weeping Afric! home of sable slaves!
Stand in your chains, and lift your voice to God!
Tell of your wrongs, till pity melts, all tears—
Tell of your wrongs, till justice swears redress—
Tell of your wrongs, till vengeance draws her sword,
Stamps her red foot, and rolls her eye of flame!

The Angel followed that swift ship of woe,

Pitying the victims whom she could not save.
The horrors of that passage!—How her heart
Sickened and quailed to view the deadly pangs
Man can inflict on man! At stilly night,
When stars shed down their tranquil, holy beams,
And Nature talked with God, she heard the moan
Of sleepless anguish o'er the sleeping wave.
When rose the sun with brilliant, cheerful brow,
Gloom, death, and horror, settled 'round the ship,
For then were wretches, who had breathed their last,
Flung to the deep—flung slow, with heavy plunge—
Flung to the sharks expecting banquet there;
And still those ocean-monsters followed close,
With wondrous instinct, passing reason's power.

Swiftly, thou bark of agony, fly on!
Fly with thy suffering freight, elude pursuit!
And thou, white lord, exult in bold success.
Evil's black clouds must lower a season here,
But crime's fell ministers draw down at last
The thunders of just vengeance. Mercy wept
Above those hapless victims of the sea,
And stretched her hands that mightier God might save,
And prayed for bleeding Afric and her wrongs.

The Angel passed to Europe, where mankind
Hath higher scaled the mountain-heights of soul,
And pressed more near perfection. Much she saw
That raised her wonder, much that caused her joy,
And much a poignant sorrow. Now she met
Virtue in rags, and Learning wanting bread ;
Here Science plumbed Creation's glimmering depths,
Measured the stars, and pierced the awful past,
Anticipating high pursuits in heaven :
There dullness plodded on, nor raised his eyes
From toil and dust, the hurrying, puny years
Filling his thoughts, the smallest scenes around,
The emmet's universe, enough for him.
She stood by death-beds, and in grief beheld
The last sad wrestlings of mortality,
And chased the fear, and soothed the final pain.
And oft she loved, when twilight's haunted hour
Made calm elysium of the purple air,
To rove some quiet burial-ground, and think
How many a heart, once tossed on passion's wave,
Or racked upon the wheel of sharp distress,
Lay pangless, tranquil now ; the flower that
drooped,
Weeping dew-tears upon the unconscious turf,

Not calmer than the body, waiting there
Reunion with the sky-ascended soul.

She watched a suicide—a female heart
Broken by wrong, and flying unto death.
The stars were quivering on a wide, deep stream
That wandered through a city's dusky bounds :
There bent the sad forsaken, straining eyes
No longer full of tears, for grief, like fire,
Had dried up feeling's fountain : from her brow,
White as sepulchral marble, and as cold,
Impatiently she dashed the falling hair,
Disordered as the thoughts within her brain.

That city with its towers, its halls of life,
An instant drew her gaze ; a million hearts
Beat gaily there, but not one heart that felt
Compassion for her anguish ; e'en if known,
Her grief had wakened only bitter scorn,
For every woe will move the world's great sigh
Save fallen woman's sorrow. Up to heaven,
In wordless prayer, she cast beseeching looks,
But in those depths, pure, calm, with holy stars,
She read no sympathy with her impure,

And tainted spirit—wrongly read no hope.
Then on the waves she fixed her steadfast glance ;
They rushed, and chafed, and eddied dark below ;
There the poor lost one deemed oblivion lay ;
There her crushed heart would bleed—would break
no more.

“ Bowed spirit, cheer thee !” to her sinking soul
Whispered the Angel ; “ Trust thy God, not man ;
He will accord the pardon man withholds ;
No wretch so lost, but God will hear his prayer.”

Smiles for a moment, o'er that cold, white cheek,
Passed like brief sunshine o'er a waste of snow ;
And the long sigh came softer from her heart,
As winds more gently blow when wandering through
A thicket of sweet roses. Heaven the while
Seemed by its peace to lift her grief from earth,
And smile on past repentance, for her guilt
Had long been mourned with bitter, contrite tears.

Alas ! for fallen Nature ! hope's sweet beam
Too soon went out, and woe, despair, came down
With their all-mantling midnight on her soul.

Shame's burden crushed her ; in that darkened hour,
The agony of life outweighed the dread
Of heaviest judgment in a world to come.
She stretched her arms—she sprang—and, with a cry
Of piercing anguish, plunged in depths below.

The Angel, heart-wrung, shuddered as she gazed,
And from the troubled waves, where sank in death
The world-spurned victim of man's broken faith,
A spirit rose, by mortal eyes unseen.
Great were its crimes, but Oh, how great its wrongs !
And if wild madness urged the fatal deed,
When clouded reason asked not what was crime,
Then God e'en dark self-murder could forgive.
That spirit looked most beautiful, most meek,
Yet sad of aspect, knowing not its doom.
The angel waited ; presently a light
Illumed the brow of that long-suffering soul—
A brilliant circlet of celestial beams,
Such as in paradise the pardoned wear.—
Then Mercy knew that madness urged its plea,
And love divine washed out the mortal's guilt ;
And welcoming the beauteous soul, she chased
All shade of sorrow from her drooping form,

All mem'ry of remorse, and every sigh,
Tinged with immortal hues her pallid cheek,
And sprinkled glory on her lustrous locks ;
Till she shone forth, bright-smiling in new life,
Like the young flower, first kissed by vernal beams ;
And Mercy, pointing skyward, sped her on,
From lower darkness up to light and God.

Winging o'er Northern Europe rapt in thought,
The Angel viewed a scene fame crowns with bays,
Yet rife with fear and horror. Lust of power,
And pride that would climb high, or lowest sink,
Too oft enslave the great ones of our world,
Drive mortals to inflict unnumbered ills
And tortures upon mortals, cutting short
The few brief days by heaven allotted here.

We see a star that, white and beautiful,
And breathing from its radiance love and peace,
Glows in the tender azure, and we dream
Its balmy clime, and silver-glistening shores,
Form an elysium, where no guilt or woe
Can sadden happy beings : but if told
Creatures live there who, spite of glorious scenes,

And love, and joy, and blessings heaped by Heaven,
Rise against creatures, race to race opposed,
Smiting and crushing, aiming still to cast
Their fellows o'er the battlements of life,
To suffering and perdition—we should call
Such tale a fable, or, if proved a truth,
That gentle star would make hearts shudder here.

And such an orb is our own lovely Earth !
The denizens of planets far in space
May view us too, and think no dreadful thing,
Like mad, wild war, can shock the heart of peace,
Or mar the golden beauty of our world.
They know not how ambition, pride, and hate,
Raise moral storms amid the seeming calm,
Or how, by our own dark and guilty deeds,
We hedge our lives with ill. Thou blackest curse
The Evil One hath brought from depths of woe !
More direful too, since glory 'round thy form
Sheds brilliant beams to veil thy hideousness,
And places on thy head a crown that looks
Of laurel formed, but ah ! of poison-leaves,
Weeping more venom than the upas-bough—
A funeral wreath, and dabbled all with blood.

O War ! indignant Reason, Justice, Truth,
Indignant Valour of the nobler mind,
Viewing thine aims, the fruits that spring from thee—
Ruin, and wrong, and anguish, and vain death,
Could they but utter half that in them burns,
Their voice would sound in thunder out to heaven,
And every accent would be withering fire,
Lightnings to blast thee on thy trophied way.
But thou wilt flourish, Hydra-headed War !
Despite our maledictions : Virtue rears
The trenchant sword, but, less than Hercules,
She cannot lop thy hundred heads away.
Love cannot charm thee, deadly monster, War !
Calm wisdom fails to smooth thy stormy front ;
And e'en religion may not drive thee back
To thy primeval hell. While Crime walks earth,
Thou, her grim offspring, wilt be rampant too :
While bold ambition schemes and avarice grasps,
Thy reign will last, earth's fiery spirits doomed
Thy sport, thy victims, and, like Indian priests,
Following well-pleased to death thy blood-stained car.

The deadly struggle, which the Angel watched,
Had ceased its terrors ; lines of furious men

No longer clashed with lines ; the sword no more
Hewed crimson rents thro' which men's souls might pass,
Before their time, into eternity.

No longer to the shaken, answering hills,
The fire-mouthed cannon roared. The smoke's dun veil,
Drawn o'er the field by Havoc's jealous hand,
To hide the bleeding hecatombs of death,
Had melted off, like guilt which shrinks from day.

Now came the sight more horrible, more dread,
Than e'en the battle's tumult. Now white Pain
Lay writhing on the soil, where late in pride
The victim struck for glory : now the groans
Of dying men, called heroes, murmured low,
Broken anon by some sharp, sudden shriek
Of agony no effort might control ;
Then fruitless cries for help, and cries of thirst
From men in bleeding torture—cries to those
Walking the crimson field, to raise their swords,
And in kind pity stab them to the heart,
That torment so might finish. Looks from some
Harrowed e'en more than sight of body's pangs—
Looks that betrayed the soul's intense despair.
Here mourned the youth, who never now would lead

To Hymen's altar the dear maid he loved ;
There wept the son, who never more should see
The aged sire, or kiss the Mother's cheek ;
And there the Father, never more to clasp
The babes that would be orphans. Livid heaps
Of what that morn were bounding, joyous frames,
With hearts brisk-beating to the voice of hope,
Lay stark, and cold—poor hands and icy brows,
Dabbled with blood, and eyes, so glassy-still,
Fixed by the thought in which the sufferer died.

Moon, rising slowly with calm, silvery face !
Pause on thy course, withhold thy gentle light ;
'Tis not for thee, sweet Vestal ! with thy brow
Of meekness, peace, and purity, to view
Such spot of fear and horror. Veil your eyes,
Ye wakening stars ! nor let your holy beams,
Meet to illumine Elysium, tremble here.
Come, saddest spectres from Cimmerian realms,
And walk this ground ! come, blackest clouds that pall
Hades' deep gulf, and hide the dreadful scene !

The Angel, shuddering, hovered o'er the plain,
Too foul, too blood-drenched for her hallowed foot.

She stretched one hand tow'rd crimson heaps of dead,
As if to curse fell war—the other hid
Her pitying, shrinking eyes. A trembling ran
From limb to limb, and e'en her glorious wings
Quivered and thrilled through all their spreading width,
In sympathy with that strong burst of grief
Which stirr'd her generous bosom. She had seen
Dire pain and misery in this lower world,
And death in countless forms had awed her soul,
But nought had shocked her like that field of blood,
Where doom and torture, not by demons sent,
Seemed of man's own creation—seemed alone
The baneful fruit of folly and of crime.
Oh! what a tale to tell in spheres above,
Of this prized, favourite star! a world that shines
The brightest mid her sisters, dower'd with gifts
Transcendent by her God, with hills and vales
Lovely enough to lure bright angels down,
Lovely enough to form bright angels' homes.
Beautiful Earth! crime-laden, fallen Man!
In intellect and thought, a spark from God,
In passion, falsehood, pride, a brand from hell.

“Farewell! thou scene of suffering and dismay!”

Whispered the Angel with pale, quivering lips.
Appalled by war's red front, her eyes no more
Could dwell on earthly horrors, and she pined
For the far realms of sempiternal peace.
Sorrowing she turned from fields of blood and
death,
To those still spheres in heaven's cerulean calm;
There Night looked holy, and her sabbath kept
Of rest, and love, and glory. Spirits there,
Wandering mid orbs where crime had cast no shade,
Held rapt commune with mighty Nature's God.
Those stellar lights she hailed as ancient friends,
But one grand orb arrested now her gaze,
Glowing amid the Pleiads, with a ray
More softly-pure, divinely beautiful,
Than aught which flashed from other beamy founts.
That central splendour, with no cloud between,
Shone like the watch-tower of near paradise,
The beacon blazing to remotest bounds,
Directing voyagers to the bowers of peace.
For that loved Eden-Land, its amaranth vales
And opal-terraced hills, she wildly sighed,
As one long exiled, and her pensive eyes
Fixed on that globe, immensest 'mid the immense,

Fixed longingly on those white dazzling shores,
Which look to us but softest, fleecy beams.

With sudden bound, all energy, all joy,
Spurning with glittering foot the earthly hill,
Her arms outspread tow'rd that attracting sphere,
The Angel rose in air. She clove the blue,
Up, up the path of radiance known so well,
A thing of fire—a living, flying thought !
Inferior spirits watched her heavenward track;
And saw along the ether, flashed by speed,
Bright coruscations trailing far behind ;
But these soon melted, like the dreams of bliss
Illuming for a moment our sad lives ;
And now a silvery thread, a feeble spark,
She shone upon the bosom of the sky—
That vanished too, and darkest midnight reigned.

THE IMMORTALS;
 OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK VIII.

SPIRIT of Love! all hail! thy subtile power
 Thrills and pervades the glorious universe.
 Thine influence, sweet compelling force, doth bind
 All matter in all worlds, all worlds to God.
 What unseen virtue issues from the sun,
 And, darting through the infinite of blue,
 Draweth the pilgrim-planets evermore
 Tow'rd his fond, radiant, vivifying arms?
 What stays the comet in his far, far course,
 And, from his wanderings of a thousand years,
 Doth call him backwards to the fount of light?
 Attraction's spell is Nature's ceaseless love.

Beautiful spirit, hail! what sheds heaven's tears,
That cloud-born sorrow fertilizing Earth?
What spreadeth in the West a gorgeous bed
Of downy gold, for Day to die upon,
And jubilant with roses hangs the East
To greet his resurrection? What doth guide
The Spring-wind's chariot, bringing to the world
Freshness and health, and life-inspiring balm?
What feeds a thousand rivers? drapes the hills
With rustling forest pomp? what sprinkles scents,
Delicious, on each tiny nun-like flower,
That, hid from man, adorns the wilderness?
Diffusive soul! unfailing Love! 'tis thou.

Dweller in human hearts! all hail! all hail!
Whether thou take affection's simplest form
'Twixt kindred, friends, or gladden wedded life,
The sweetest bliss-cup man can quaff below
Is brimm'd with thy rich wine; his choicest feast
Comes from thy garden of ambrosial fruits.
Thou, midst the desert of our cares and crimes,
Dost plant a green oasis. Thou hast caught
The faint dear echo of the voice of joy,
That filled lost paradise, and brought it down,

Through all the sorrows of the primal curse,
Harmonious to our souls. Oh, wide-spread love !
All-tyrannous, all-swaying, wondrous love !
Despite thy frequent pains, thy sad farewells,
Thou art Earth's sweetest, dearest, heavenliest guest.
Thou flashest from the skies, a quenchless spark
From one great loving Spirit, lighting up
Bright altars in our hearts ; thy chastened joy
Not only blesses time, 'tis doomed to flow,
Cleared of each stain which dims its current now,
A stream of pleasure for unending years.

A tale of earthly love—a love that lived
Through sorrows and afflictions, changeless, strong ;
A love whose torch, unquenched by death's chill flood,
Passed the dark river, and, with sacred fire,
Still lit the spirit freed from bonds of clay,
And while the knowledge-seeking pilgrim roamed
Those libraries of the sky whose books are stars,
Still pointed on to bliss, until it reached
The Central lands, the Eden-bowers of rest.

Life had just budded into Spring, the woods
Of thick, fresh hopes were all alive with song ;

And flowers of sweet delights—flowers honey-leaved—
Perfumed her joyous path. O sun of youth !
Bright is thy shining to the ardent soul,
Ere stern experience draws its envious cloud
Across thy dazzling glory ! Earth puts on,
To youthful view, the raiment of a bride,
And glides along the sunshine of the sky,
In freshness, loveliness, and bounding bliss.
Youth never dreams of trials, falsehood's guile,
But thinks of blessings, thinks of truth's sweet
heaven ;
Youth never mourns the past, but only looks,
While leaning on the glowing breast of hope,
Straight tow'rd the future's golden-turning door.

Cecile was young, and Nature to her youth
Had added that most rich—oft fatal gift
By woman prized—the gift of loveliness.
Her beauty, like the almond's hurrying bough,
Had burst to early blossom, yet it seemed
No beauty doomed to fade in briefest days,
But beauty which would triumph o'er the winds
And frosts of fortune, passing into fruit,
Sweetening, and mellowing, through a happy life.

Go, view some statue of the ancient Greek,
Making substantial fancy's airiest dream,
Calm, quiet, yet most lovely—pure, yet warm,
Breathing of mind from each fair lineament,
And clothed as with an atmosphere of thought—
Such was Cecile, save ardent feelings lay
Within that breast, or, wakened, darted shafts
From the sweet oval bow of those black eyes,
That mocked the Sculptor's art. Her cheek was pale,
Telling of spirit's fervour; but when joy,
Hope, or surprise, her heart's clear lake perturbed,
The hasty blood would eddying circles make,
And ruffle all her smooth and sunny brow
To tremulous flushings. Warm expression, soul,
Humility, yet hopes that towered to Heaven,
And gentle kindness seeking others' good—
These 'round her beauty threw a chastened light,
Like sobered radiance circling sainted heads.

She loved and was beloved: the Attic sage
A strange, sweet fancy held, that oft in pairs
Souls are created, and designed by heaven
To love in time and through eternity.
When fate, unpitying, parts such spirits here

They seek each other, sighing through the world ;
Till, like two streams which dash from adverse points,
And join their waters with a glad embrace,
They meet, and blend their beings, from that hour,
In bliss or pain, divided never more.

He, the congenial spirit, proved that love
May fill the heart, while Mind, with burning zeal,
Doth worship wisdom's goddess. All the heights
Of heaven-high learning did he long to scale,
And all its sunless depths his soul would plumb.
He turned from life's mad whirl and Pleasure's walks,
To muse with those great spirits, who have mused
In other years, and built their dreams and thoughts
Into grand pyramids defying time.
Yet most he loved to roam broad Nature's realms,
Feasting imagination and proud mind
On wonders stars disclose. He longed to solve,
Still prison'd in the body, secrets heaven
Doth hide from mortals, and would ponder deep
Celestial mysteries, soul's high destiny,
And humbly thy great nature, ruling God!

He loved the maiden with a love that soared

Beyond mere sense—beyond the fleeting hour.
Were love to end with life, a transient charm,
To soothe us in our night of pain and grief,
And scatter 'round us roses but to fade ;
Oh, then he would have shunned its keen delights,
Nor yielded up his soul to bliss so brief.
But mortal love shall reach the immortal fields,
And thus 'tis wise to sow its seeds on earth
For future blowing : yes, the beauteous wreath
Shall flourish, to undying amaranths changed,
Sharing the spirit's proud, eternal doom,
In spite of thee, O Death ! of thee, O Grave !

She faded in her youth ; a shadow lay
On the once smiling landscape of her hopes.
The silvery orb of night grows faint and dim
Before the rising sun ; so grew her face
Paler and dimmer, while the fell disease
Rose to meridian height, and eat with fire
The body's strength away. Oh, grief most deep,
For loving hearts to watch health's shrinking stream
Run less and less, and know 'twill soon be dry !
The quivering embers of a brief, doomed life,
Slowly, but surely, spark by spark, go out ;

And Beauty's star, so treasured and admired,
Behind the hills of darkness, fade and set—
Oh, woe of woes, the waiting thus for death !

Isle of the deep-blue sea, embossed with woods,
Where vines creep o'er the rugged lava-rocks,
Like Charity which covereth darkest sins !
Where rills leap murmuring down the terraced steeps,
Their fairy harps just heard amid the swell
Of Ocean's mighty organ ; where each flower,
From England's daisy to the aloe's pride,
And cactus all a-flame, paints mount and dell,
Bringing back Eden to those lonely shores,
And stamping beauty where volcanos raged,
Like meekness settling calm on passion's brow.

Lovely Madeira ! boasted land of health !
To whose sweet breezy hills pale Sickness flies,
Trembling mortality that hugs dear life,
Hoping to add unto her chain of days
That fast is breaking, a few links of time,
And drink, with strengthened powers, a few more draughts
Of earth's delicious air, and lift dim eyes
A little longer to God's cheerful sun.

The cottage, gay with bloom of creeping plants,
Decked the hill's side, and faced the balmy South;
The slope between it and the foamy sea
Looked brilliant, checkered with a million flowers,
And social groups of many-coloured trees.
They placed her in the porch where Summer-airs,
With pinions cooled by wandering o'er the wave,
Sprinkled reviving freshness, while perfume,
From beds of sweet carnation, rose, and musk,
Might gratify once more her thirsting sense.
Oh, beautiful yet mournful that young face,
On which disease, with hard, remorseless hand,
Had traced the word of—death. The veins of blue
Crossed her white brow, like rills that traverse snow;
And languor half had closed her thoughtful eyes
Which glittered with last light. The poor thin hand
Lay cold and drooping, e'en too weak to grasp
The flowers it strove to fold. Her little foot,
Shrunk, feeble, could no more support the frame,
Though slender as the forms we see in dreams,
Gliding in fairy-land beneath the moon.
Her hair, in all its black and glossy length,
As if it shared the languor body felt,
Spread down her pale, pale bosom, virtue's seat—

Spread o'er the couch in rich, abundant curls,
Dear to one heart, as though each curl possessed
A mystic power, and was itself a life.

Behold that gentle, uncomplaining one,
Thus slowly sinking, fading from the world,
Loving earth's scenes intensely, yet so soon
To close her eyes on all that charmed her here ;
Clinging to human hearts, yet soon to know
Death's cruel separation. Oh ! confess,
Mid piteous sights, no sight more pitiful !
Sight that might bow philosophy to dust,
And dim with tears the stoic's iron eye.

He bent above her, motionless and hushed,
Unwilling to disturb her silent dream ;
For lifted hand, and fixed and anxious gaze,
Betrayed a spirit rapt in deepest thought :
Day, in the Western garden of the clouds,
Was gathering now rich flowers, all crimson-leaved,
To hang about the cradle of young Eve ;
And he seemed pausing on his downward course,
Weeping hot tears of light to bid adieu
A world he loved so well. Along the hills

The winds were dying with a murmured plaint,
And the wide chesnut-forests drooped their boughs,
As wearied with the breezes of the day,
Wearied with light, and asking for repose.
The long green waves came heaving to the shore,
Slowly and solemnly, and when they broke
In spumy silver on the pink-lipped shells,
Their voice swelled deep yet prayer-like, grand yet sad.
Earth, heaven, all sympathised with that hushed hour,
For sure a sorrow, tempered by sweet hope,
Touched while it calmed great Nature's conscious heart.

Cecile moved not, her meditative eyes
Following the sinking sun ; the flaming orb
Grew less intensely bright, and, softening, turned,
Ere reaching ocean's brim, to mellow gold :
It hung above the billow, broad, immense,
A glowing, living glory ; then long lines
Of amethystine radiance formed a road,
Pompous and jewell'd, o'er the level main,
As if for some great cavalcade of souls,
Hastening to heaven's bright gates, which burned afar,
Where sky and ocean joined. That orb would sink,
Shorn of his majesty, and seem to die

Beneath the shaded and entombing sea;
Yet Morn would come, fresh-breathed, exulting Morn,
And give him joyously to earth again,
With warming ray, and vivifying smile,
And all his bridegroom robes of splendour on;
But she no more may view him, her fond eye
Closed to the beautiful and grand by death.

And whither would the hopeful spirit flee?
Momentous thought which oft perplexed her heart!
Heaven's sacred page breathed holy trust and peace,
And filled her with a joy that came from God;
Yet ardent Nature longed to know how soul
Might pass uninjured from this shattered frame,
This wreck of matter, into fields of light;
How live, move, act, and where the realms of bliss—
If heaven were here, in space, or some far orb
Unreached by sight, unvisited by thought.
The sage may hold that ambient air is heaven,
That souls will wing for ever yon deep blue,
Passing from paradisaal world to world,
Gathering their bliss from knowledge, and the wells
Of unexhausted beauty; this, too, this
Was hoped and humbly asked by him she loved.

But mind for her a narrower circle took ;
True to her woman's feelings, she did think
The sage's heaven but cold ; that constant views
Of wandering worlds, however fair or grand,
Would weary and distract ; that largest stores
Of knowledge, howe'er rich, would never yield
That wealth of bliss the craving bosom asks.

For her one calm, blest spot beyond the stars,
Or e'en a planet beautiful as ours,
Ere shadowed by the clouds of woe and crime,
Peopled by pure affections, with One Power
To watch and love it, smiling blessings down,
Seemed to her humbler thoughts a sweeter heaven,
More fraught with joy that fills and satisfies,
Than widest fields of bright cerulean space,
Than proudest flights through systems infinite,
And all the wonders found in all the globes ;
For these may tire at last, while bliss that springs
From happy intercourse of soul with soul,
Shall pall not, die not, an exhaustless stream,
Whose course is love, whose fountain-head is God.

Life's last few sands were running slowly out ;

The pale, faint bow was melting from the sky :
Cecile was gazing on an anxious face
Where sorrow cast its shade, and large, slow tears
Betokened grief too strong, too deep for words ;
But death's sweet victim spoke in accents low :

“ The solemn mysteries of our loftier state
Will soon be solved, and all doubt's shadows flee ;
But if the realms I speed to be yon skies,
Where, as thou deemest, spirits love to roam
Among fair stars and systems, seeking joy ;
Or if God's paradise be one fixed spot,
Where Christ's bright form will bless our longing eyes,
While knowledge, holy aspirations, mix
With simpler joys, dear memories, and pure love,
I bow resigned ; yet one sad, haunting thought
Disturbs my bosom more than other fears.”

A moment's anguish filled those asking eyes ;
He stooped and clasped her, kissed her faded cheek,
Bidding her tell what burdened thus her soul.

“ My dread is this—amidst the countless throng
Of spirits and of angels in the skies,

Thou mayst not find me, when thine hour arrives,
To break earth's cumbering bonds, but haply roam,
Seeking me vainly through the fields above.
Think not I shall forget thee e'en in heaven;
No, loved on earth, thine image will be linked
With every thought on high; for, reft of thee,
Methinks the sweetest joy would scarce be joy:
Yet this is crime, is madness—hush, my heart!
Father in heaven! forgive thine erring child,
Whose soul is sinful, as her frame is weak."

She strove to kneel, but could not from the seat
Move her half-fainting form. She clasped her hands,
Praying for pardon, and her lifted eyes
Spoke sweet contrition, while unaltered love:
Then tremulous in his ear her wish was breathed,
A lengthened pause between each feeble word.
She promised, if allowed by pitying heaven,
To wait in that green vale where first they met—
Wait by the fount where oft, at twilight hour,
They talked of future days, and wove bright dreams
Of earthly bliss, and never-changing faith.

Poor heart, she spake as human feelings urged;

Perchance 'tis God's high will no souls on earth
Shall wait for those they love ; the good may pass,
Borne on the wings of guardian cherubim,
To bright beatitude the hour they die.

She leant within his arms ; her young head drooped
More low and low, and as the sun's thin rim
Of quivering fire now left the ruby wave,
The farewell ray soft-tinged her falling hair,
Fluttered upon the forehead's marble calm,
And gave the cheek a warm fictitious glow.
In her hushed breast no peevish sorrow dwelt,
But love that found not utterance—love that clung
In hopeful trust to Him who saved her soul,
And in fond truth to one dear worshipped heart,
Her own, her own, through all eternity.
Her hand that lay in his so still, so cold,
Could feel no more ; her lips that kissed his hair,
His forehead, in abandonment of grief,
Now closed, or murmured only wordless sighs,
That fainter, fainter, like the twilight air,
Breathed, paused, and breathed again, and then were
hushed.

But Oh, those eyes, expressive, yearning eyes,

Through which hope, feeling, all the mind looked out,
Were fixed upon him—fixed unto the last.
What can subdue, what touch us, e'en in death,
Like the heart-speaking, loving, soul-lit eyes?

Daylight was dying from the world, and fast
The beam of life was fading in that form;
The stars were stealing from the dark blue depths,
And beautifying shadow and the gloom;
So faith illumined, with her cheering beams,
The sable brow of death. Come, Mercy! Hope!
Gladden that lovely saint's expiring hour,
Point to the skies, and not the turf beneath,
Whisper of paradise, and flowers, and song,
Of radiant crowns, of God's approving smile,
And an eternity of hallowed love.

Life for an instant fann'd its subtile flame;
A tremulous sigh—a pressure of the hand,
Affection's tender touch—a gentle smile,
But no farewell, and that blest spirit passed
From the dark portal of its prison-house,
To renovated strength, and light, and joy,
To everlasting youth, and peace, and God.

THE IMMORTALS;
 OR,
 GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK IX.

GRIEF doth not always kill : a heavy load
 The camel bears ere sinking on the waste ;
 So fares the heart on life's poor pilgrimage.
 Still we may live, though sorrow striketh down
 The palace of our joys, and all its pride
 Be turned to marble ruins. Reft of love,
 And that dear worshipped form, Bernardin stood
 Alone in desolation ; like the tree
 Once fondly clasped by Summer's leafy vine ;
 The lightning came ; the embracer, withering, fell,
 And strewed the earth in death. The oak aloft
 Still lifts its naked branches, proud yet sad ;

And as winds toss its bare, ungarnished arms,
It mourns the perished one—its fond green love,
That decked each branch with beauty, and hung blooms
Of purple promise on its grateful strength.

He did not rush into the blaze of life,
To scare the haunting spectre of distress,
But gave his soul to thought and studious toil,
Hoping to cheat the weary, grief-dark hours.
He threaded history's labyrinthine walks,
And wooed the light the sun of science sheds ;
Yet still his burning aspirations turned
Tow'rd the grand secrets of the peopled skies ;
His hopes, his wishes, ever flew beyond
The honours others crave, and this small star,
This dim, poor anxious world we call our own.
But e'en while fancy swept the stellar plain,
One gentle vision, on his proudest dreams,
Rose like a moon amidst the sombre heavens,
Making his dark and lofty studies bright.
The lamp upon his page flung idle rays ;
He thought upon the history of her heart,
Not chronicles of time. Great Nature's laws
Were nought to spells that swayed affection's world.

Awake, he only heard her gentle voice
Soft-echoing down the gallery of years ;
Asleep, she filled his every longing dream,
Beckoning with radiant hand to happier shores.
Her image, with sweet sunshine, warmed and lit
Past, present, future, while immortal hope
Wove around darkness an unfading bow.

He died, where hoary Egypt crowns the plain
With monumental glory, and old Time
Triumphant walks upon a myriad graves.
They placed his bones beneath the herbless sands,
To moulder with the Pharaohs, and a host,
Once lords and princes, now poor mummy-forms,
That wait with him the resurrection-morn.
There lay the shattered dome that held the soul,
A crumbling ruin, like Egyptian shrines,
To mingle slowly with forgotten earth ;
The occupant was gone, in freedom, power,
To pass along the world, the expanded germ .
Not visible to sense, but brightly formed
Of elements ethereal, mocking death,
And bearing all the memories, feelings, hopes,
It proudly bore when linked to grosser clay.

The student-soul, the worshipper of God,
The lover of the virtuous one in bliss,
Glided from Egypt to his native land,
Swift as a ray from Morning's opening eye
Launched tow'rd the western dark; for soul is dowered
With lightning fleetness next to rapid thought.
Yes, that young spirit, free awhile to roam,
Sought the dear haunts of childhood, where so oft
He dreamt life's happy dreams with her he loved;
Oh, would she keep the promise breathed in death?

A moment, and he stood beside the fount,
The olden trysting-place, but where Cecile?
There, spread the beech above the crystal wave—
The tree that, long ago, weird Nature's harp,
Had whispered music in love's pensive ear:
There, stood the rustic seat on which she leant:
Nought, nought was changed; could that dear spirit be
The only altered thing, forgetting love,
And vows to meet him in the land of souls?
His piercing eyes looked 'round him, but no shape
Emerged in beauty to his longing gaze:
He sighed her name, and listened—songs of birds,
The fountain's slumbrous gush, and low-voiced winds

Creeping from leaf to leaf, alone were heard :
And so he bowed and mourned, while memory's spell
Called up past hours of love, and meetings sweet,
By that time-hallowed fountain's mossy brink,
Yet while he mourned, he blest a ruling God.

A sudden brilliance flashing on the fount—
A sudden rustle of descending wings—
And, looking up with shaded eyes, he saw
A form of glory passing human thought ;
An angel this of might, whose wing could plough
The sea of ether with the speed of beams,
His shape majestic of placid pride,
On which, self-luminous, no other form,
Crossing the sun, could cast a staining shade ;
Yet lovely while august, the Immortal stood,
Presenting all the graceful lineaments
That mark a breathing being in our world.
He looked a sudden meteor darted down,
His wings, his brow, a-blaze with opal beams ;
His eyes could pierce dull matter, reading thought
In other angels' bosoms ; he had power
Surpassing common spirits of the sky,
Yet his great presence brought no fear, but peace ;

Guide and protector of weak human souls,
A holiness and beauty, love and joy,
Breathed 'round him like a heavenly atmosphere,
Softening his lofty look, and awful mien.

Gazing on earth's young spirit sorrowing there,
The glorious agent of the Eternal felt
Ineffable compassion. All was known
To that great friend and visitor of men.

“Poor spirit! weep not;” fell the murmured
words,
Solemn yet gentle as the voice of Night,
When winds lie sleeping on the starry air;
“Lament not earthly love; yet 'tis no crime
For soul to love fond soul, for God is love,
Implanting in all breasts the fire divine.
She could not meet thee here; expiring man
Must make no vows to mortals left behind.
Her pure, forgiven soul was borne on high
By gentlest seraphim, and now is blest.”

The child of earth all eagerness looked up,
And raised imploringly his folded hands;

“ Oh, guide me to her, if this erring heart
Deserve such bliss !”

“ I may not take thee now ;
But thou hast leave to indulge the ardent wish
That made thy life one burning, ceaseless prayer ;
And I am sent to lift thee from this sphere.
I know, when mortal, thou didst long to range
The universe of spirit, and to scan
The marvels of creation—come with me !
Fear not, for easily through liquid space,
And, light as thought, can spirit-essence glide.
Long is the journey to the gates of heaven,
And, on our passage, we will read the book
Of God’s creative wisdom—come with me !”

The heavenly guardian took the trembling hand
Of earth’s freed child, who felt, unknown before,
A strange quick power flash lightning through his
frame,
While his strong wish to visit other worlds,
And all his thirst for knowledge, burned anew.
The great one’s arching wings, with sudden blaze,
And coruscating splendour, outward spread,

A golden glory on our lower air ;
 And, with his charge, up silently from earth,
 Terribly beautiful, serenely grand,
 Like spiral flame, he shot into the sky.

Ere the heart beateth twice, a living beam
 Can reach the moon*—so did those spirits mount.
 They paused on outstretched wings, to mark the globe
 We call our servant—Earth's fair Ministress.
 How changed her aspect! now no longer smiled
 The gentle lady with the pale, sweet face,
 And foot, white-sandalled, walking azure heaven,
 Inspiring bards, and melting hearts to love.

Distance will beautify, and throw a veil
 Of softness over horror; as long years
 Exalt and sanctify the deeds of man.
 The moon no calm, bright dwelling-place appeared,
 But cloudless, herbless, streamless, blackly spread
 In arid desolation; (¹¹) it did look
 A mourning thing, accurs'd, and all forlorn,

* Light is transmitted to us from the moon in one second and a quarter.

A world in ghastly ruins! splintered rocks,
Ne'er worn by breeze or rain, rose jagg'd and sharp,
Painfully glittering in the solar blaze :
A mass of vitreous mountains, cone-shaped steeps,
Seemed tossed around, convulsively upheaved,
Tossed as in sport by some dark, mocking fiend ;
And frequent from their tops burst jets of flame,
While down their sides, like blood, hot lava rolled ;
And oh ! more full of fear, than if spoke out
Loud thunder-tongues from every fiery mount,
Dead silence reigned through all the dreary scene,
For pulsed above, below, no vital air.
Charged hills sent forth fierce lightnings unto hills,
Clouds never wandering 'round them ; earthquakes rent
The cindered plain, and toppled down the peaks ;
But still no sound went booming up the sky,
Sound that might speak of Nature's cheerful life ;
A calm most dread, a stillness horrible,
Sat, like a mighty Death, on all the globe.

The angel-guide addressed the trembling soul,
And told the strange, wild history of the moon,
E'en from its birth a ruin, terror's home ;
And still it ploughed its melancholy way,

A savage waste undecked by flower or tree.
 Enough, it served to lace, with cheerful beams,
 The sombre garment Night doth cast around
 Our slumbering planet, while from roughest hills
 It rained sweet influence, like a kindly heart
 Most happy serving others, though that heart
 May beat beneath a beggar's tattered vest.
 All generous, faithful moon ! 'tis God's decree
 That fruitfulness and joy should ne'er be thine,
 But, barren ever, thou shouldst walk thy round,
 A lowly handmaid waiting on our world.
 Glide on, calm orb ! though lifeless, aiding life,
 Though void of grace, bestowing beauty's gift,
 And, though most mournful, silvering earth with smiles.

Away ! the immortals voyagers far behind
 Leave the volcanic moon ; their pathway lies
 Tow'rd the red star that nestles near the sun.
 With swift-wing'd foot, and golden-flaming wand,
 The youngest planet, Mercury, hurries on.
 First in the train of our life-bearing worlds,
 High honour waits this small but active sphere.
 To man he seems immersed in fiery rays,
 Rays that, if blazing here, might wither up,
 And turn to dust, all verdant, living things ;

Banish such dream—great Nature's secret know;
Wrapping most worlds, the changeful air alone
Tempers the solar heat, and cools or warms. (12)
In this sweet star the air floats purely light,
As on the summit of earth's loftiest hills,
And fiercest beams evolve no torrid blaze.

The shading clouds the travellers swiftly pierce,
And, lighting on a mountain, gaze around.
Rich emerald green clothes all the fruitful plains,
And breezes freshly blow from steep to steep,
Like viewless coursers urged by lusty Health.
The snows melt sparkling at the illumined pole,
Brimming the rivers wandering tow'rd the South,
And, as they glide, they bear upon their breasts
Rose-lipped Fertility, and dew-eyed Mirth;
While Spring pranks all the margins thick with flowers,
And sets the glad birds singing in the groves,
And calls the bees, late slumbering; from their cells,
And large-wing'd moths, round, golden, as the stars,
To feast and frolic in the genial ray.
Nature, not withered, as we wrongly deem,
But fair, and jubilant; and crowned with life,
Proud to be nearest light's refulgent lord—
Nature, in bursting bliss, doth clap her hands,

And toss her tresses from' her giddy head,
And, like a blithe young bacchante, dance for joy.

The forms that tread the mossy turf, or sit,
Embowered 'mid trees by flag-lined, humming brooks,
Are small but beautiful; they almost seem,
To Earth's pleased Spirit, an embodiment
Of mundane dreams of peopled fairy-land.*
Their gaiety, in that pure, subtile air,
The lightness, and the gushing forth of soul,
Surpass aught known on earth; the ills and pains,
Doomed by wise Heaven to shade each human lot,
Are borne with happiest temper; gleesome hearts
Beat in their ever reckless, jocund breasts.
Too brief their lives for discontent or strife,
Smile begets smile, glad souls affect glad souls;
And hoping, trusting, chasing every care,
They bless their world, and ceaseless feed on joy.

* That the planets are inhabited, no thoughtful mind can doubt; and although this "Journey through the Solar System" is, of course, a mere poetic fiction or vision, yet, we think, that the peculiar varieties of planetary beings, and the duration of their lives, may in some slight degree be conjectured from a consideration of the different constitutions of those planets, their respective magnitudes, their distances from the sun, and the length of their seasons.

Glittering afar, with open, diamond eye,
How fair an orb is Venus!—Travelling space,
And loving Eve and Morn with constant faith,
And smiling rays, white, spotless through the blue,
As glorified beyond her sister stars,
How beautiful is Venus!—From our world
We look with envious eyes, and long to mount,
And tread her shores of soft, translucent pearl.
Fond fancy paints Elysium in that orb ;
We deem its flowers more bright, its vales more green,
Than flowers and vales on earth ; its wandering streams
More pure and musical than waters here.
Romance weaves 'round that planet richest spells,
And tuneful bards in every age have burned,
Singing the glories of sweet Evening's star,
And hanging wreaths of immortality,
On the white beauty of her silvery brow.

Oh ! what the mortal dreamt, the Immortal found,
While with his guide, slow down the crimson'd West,
He wing'd enrapt, as there soft Venus turned
Her languid bosom from the torrid sun,
Seeking to cool her forehead, and to close
Her passion-lidded eyes awhile in sleep.
They paused a moment on a floating cloud,

Stained to a blood-red ruby, and though far
The sumptuous planet basked and laughed below,
They caught the odors, faint and delicate,
Rising from plains of aromatic flowers,
And heard the gurglings of unnumbered brooks,
Cool-sparkling down romantic, reedy dells,
While murmured ever, up the rosy air,
Dulcet farewells to calm retiring Day—
Sweet human song—not one uncertain voice,
But blended strains from countless multitudes,
And swelling, deepening, and increasing still;
As if not only each glad being there
Anthem'd his joy, but wood and streamy vale,
And cavern'd hill, and wave-kissed promontory,
Breathed forth a melody to rival man's,
And charm the spirit of the sunset-hour.

It was the orb where reigned bright poetry :
How few, among e'en thoughtful mortals here,
Draw bliss from the ideal, or can mount
Above the sod of our dark, weary world !
But each full heart in Venus warmly glowed ;
Imagination's children, they could find
Rapture in hopes, and joy in airiest dreams.

To banish far all cares, all thoughts of grief,
Was deemed the spirit's duty. Every form
Of splendour or of grace that Nature showed,
Proved an exhaustless well of pure delight.
The valley preached humility; the sea
Raised a sublime devotion; and the stars,
Filling the illumined, wondrous book of God,
Seemed great Creation's history writ in flame,
The eternal poem of Omnipotence.
The trees and flowers were more than trees and flowers,
Calling up visions of rich loveliness,
And thoughts of Him who sprinkled them with hues,
Green and vermillion: God's whole universe
Closed 'round them like a feeling sweet and blest.

It was the orb of love. Impressive, warm,
And ever quaffing draughts at Beauty's fount,
Such spirits well might own love's thralling power.
Love in no other star controlled the heart
With such a sceptred tyranny as there.
Sons of the beam, with feelings wild and strong,
They revelled in extremes. All passions found
A home within their bosoms, yet 'twas Love,
That, like some giant, lorded o'er the rest—

♦

The one great leading note of Being's song
The race, in look, in stature, likened ours,
Venus and Earth, in rank and dignity,
Refulgent twins : but Beauty walks our world,
Like perfect virtue, shining rarely out ;
There, woman took no form save beauty's mould ;
As every rose, dew-steeped, hath sweet perfume,
And every star in heaven is fair and bright.
Her dowry grace, she smiled in loveliness
Through buoyant youth, and carried to old age
The glowing feature, and the dazzling eye.
Years bowed not limb, nor wrote their wrinkle-tales
On alabaster brow, and peachy cheek.
The curse of slow decadence fell not there ;
It seemed as Time could only take her breath,
And lay her beautiful within the tomb.

But think not crime unknown in this bright star ;
Did man against his Maker ne'er rebel,
Nor fiery passions warp him oft to wrong,
Venus were paradise. But God hath placed
Mortals on trial here, to strive, like us,
With dire temptation, and make pure their hearts
For loftier regions in a life to come.

Evil doth share mysterious power with good !
Such the great law through all the varied range
Of finite being—problem unresolved—
Evil doth share mysterious power with good.

Yet, star of evening ! other planet-worlds
Shall still admire, and, envious, gaze on thee,
Looking so softly-radiant, sweetly-calm,
Robed like a shining angel, glory-crowned,
The first that sparkles in the deepening blue,
Worthiest to lead the brilliant train of Night.
Star of serenity, by Godhead formed
When smiling brightest on the universe !
We hail thee, truest Island of the Blest,
The world of pleasure; poetry, romance,
The home of peace, the dream-land of the soul,
The happy empire of the fervid heart,
The silvery bower of universal love.

Again they sweep the depths, repassing Earth ;
Before them hangs the rosy throbbing Mars.
As near they draw, a picture, gorgeous, soft,
Grows on their view ; the eye takes plainly in
The rounded world, and follows every curve

The deep-green sea impresses on the land—⁽¹³⁾
 Windings of beauty, shining creek and cove.
 Islands, thick-fringed with palms that shade tall rocks—
 Of ruddy gems, spring circling from the wave :
 Wide continents reveal all Nature's wealth,
 In hills and plains embossed with living green ;
 In trees of each imaginable hue ;
 And rivers silver-surfaced by the sun ;
 No scorching, withering heat beneath the line,
 No herbless desert-plains of boundless sand,
 But varied flowers, eternal Summer flowers,
 Like a rich belt of beauty 'round the globe,
 A fadeless iris wove by Nature's God.

And man thinks fertile Mars a moonless world,
 But lo ! the small, red orb steals nestling close,
 Raising the tides, and brightening midnight's gloom.
 Not stern, not grand—a world of gentleness,
 Here the young Seasons, joyous sisters, dance,
 Dispensing blessings through the jocund year.
 On this cool, happy soil, no serpent creeps,
 And roams no savage beast with fangs of death.
 Like warmer Venus, Mars doth echo Earth ⁽¹⁴⁾
 In richest beauty, but to Earth must yield

In majesty severe, in mass and power,
In the sublimity of mountain pride,
And the expanse of ocean's sounding realms.

The Angel stretched his hand tow'rd peopled plains,
And cities shining on the banks of lakes ;
" Behold this world ! the tracts to man assigned,
A glowing Eden, with no curse that casts
A shadow on its beauty ; here alone
Spirit hath nearly reached perfection's goal ;
Here mortals never fell—a noble race,
Not like your brethren, by dire passions torn,
But gentle as their planet ; ne'er they lose
The balance of their souls, but calmly pass
Their hopeful lives in pristine innocence.
Earth's sons misname this planet fiery Mars,
But war's dread demon finds no entrance here,
A hero's proud renown uncraved, unknown.
They fear not death ; crime only points its dart ;
Their souls throw off the chrysalis of clay,
And flash to immortality and light,
To live with us, free tenants of the skies ;
For mortals breathe a moment, then become,
E'en like ourselves, the blest inhabitants

Of glory's bright, eternal palaces,
 Built in the blue immensity by God."

Bernardin mused and marvelled, following slow
 His angel-guide, oft pausing in his flight
 To catch some beauty fading on his view,
 To breathe the scents the planet left in space,
 Exhaled from gummy woods and balm-lipped flowers,
 And, with fine nerves, to drink the music soft
 Of birds, and choiring waves, and human song,
 That, raising undulations far and wide,
 Thrilled many a league the pure ethereal paths.

Their course is outward, earth and sun behind ;
 They fly along our System, ether's waves
 Silently cloven by their brilliant wings,
 White rays the foam that marks their rapid flight.
 They search for planet-worlds, and now they meet
 A small green body wandering down the blue,
 A world in miniature, with tiny hills,
 And bosky vales scarce large enough for fays
 To dance in by the starlight; while the sea
 Looks only like a glassy, narrow lake ;
 The rivers are but rills of nectarous sweet,

And trees are dwarfed to flowrets, rosy-stemm'd.
Another globe—another still careers,
Actively journeying 'round the lordly sun ;
And now a smaller, now a larger flies,
That emerald bright,—this coated thick with flowers.
All urge the same long course, but still apart,
Untiring pilgrims travelling joyous on,
In ceaseless sunshine, and harmonious peace.

“ These are the globes seen faintly from your earth,
Raising the wonder of the curious sage.
He calls them asteroids ; and some have deemed
The shining specks the ruins of a world
Once huge and glorious, long, long ages back,
Shivered to atoms by convulsive throes,
While the torn fragments 'round the firmament
Must roam forlorn for ever.—Blind belief !
As if Omnipotence, in moulding worlds,
Could wander into error. (¹⁵) Spirit, no !
With high design He cast these drops of gold,
These fairy orbs, along the aërial road.
I well remember when they first beamed forth,
Myriads of ages ere thy race arose
On earth's then shaping and chaotic star.

Life reigneth here, but not immortal man ;
 God takes delight in each existent thing,
 From humble flowers to eagles cleaving air,
 Or wherefore should he give them being's joy ?
 Yon planets bloom and shine beneath his care,
 Sky-Islets, river'd, fountain'd, flower'd and valed,
 Laughing for ever on their glittering way,
 Full of all plants to fondling Nature dear,
 And full of gay, exulting, beauteous forms ;
 Sweet throated, painted birds, and golden bees,
 And placid zebras with their rich-ringed sides,
 And antelopes that fear no blood-stained fang :
 These, though they boast not reason, live in love,
 Existence to their hearts sufficient bliss."

Another flight through ether, outward still,
 Bernardin following close the Angel's track.
 The silvery point they lately watched in space,
 Grew momentarily more broad, more huge, more bright,
 Then rounded to a world. A something breathed
 Superior from that globe, slow-rolling on,
 Fraught with dread majesty, and kingly power,
 Monarch of all the planets. Vastness there
 Sat on a throne, its pillars propped by Time,

While Awe bowed low before the mighty hills,
Stupendous altars Nature reared to God.

But now the long dark lines that mortals see,
Belting the globe with thunder, rain, and storm,*
Unveiled their terrors : peal on peal rolled out,
Far-sounding into space. Anon through chasms
Of rifted clouds, they viewed the giant world ;
And the huge mountains, which had shrunk our Alps
To petty molehills, looked all crowned with fire,
Lightnings the diadems upon them placed.
The cataracts, down-dashing from the hills,
Seemed broad sheet-masses formed of diamond-sparks ;
Long rivers mocked our Niles and Amazons,
And Earth's wide oceans were but tranquil lakes
To the loud-waved, unfathomed, mighty seas.

The earth-born spirit gazed, but could not speak ;
And now they passed behind this royal globe,
Where Night her mantle waved, rich-fringed with stars ;

* Dark streaks, termed the "belts of Jupiter," surround the equatorial regions, supposed to be dense clouds floating in the planet's atmosphere, and influenced by currents of air, similar to our Trade Winds.

They shone the same, as mortals see them blaze,
 Arcturus, white Orion, and the road
 Of opal splendour, leading 'round that sun,
 Creation's centre, glory's dazzling home.
 But the fair moons gleamed large, and silvery-soft,
 Ordained to cheer the giant's night, and walk
 Servants around him, for his health and joy ;
 While from the snow-wrapt poles, electric fires,
 Rich with a thousand colours, ever streamed,
 Lighting the dark, like Hope the sunless tomb.

“ And this is Jupiter !” the Angel cried,
 “ The crown of all your system. (16) Thou dost see
 A world most proud, stupendous, and sublime,
 A thousand earths here moulded in one globe ;
 Yet with Omnipotence your smaller star
 Hath equal value, while 'tis more beloved.
 Not magnitude, but worth is prized by God,
 And moral grandeur passes matter's pomp.
 Yon world is peopled by a lordly race,
 Dying and yet immortal. Follow me,
 And view the sons of this colossal sphere.”

The gorgeous city spread o'er hill and vale,

In marble sumptuousness, and dazzling pride,
Surpassing aught the Babylonian reared,
Or Græcia shaped from dreams of loveliness.
One palace had outshone Imperial Rome ;
And the long streets had been to earthly foot
The journey of a moon. The forms of men
Were grand and dignified to suit their world.
A calmness smoothed their pensive, lofty brows,
Unknown to dwellers in our anxious star ;
Rarely they smiled, too grave, too proud, for
mirth ;
Yet sullen gloom did shadow not their souls,
For contemplation and still melancholy
Turned them to sages. Theirs it was to live
A thousand years in unbowed majesty, (¹⁷)
Gaining soul-wealth that vast experience yields.
They trod not walks of science, like ourselves,
But deeply studied Mind's mysterious book,
And, all harmonious in their creed, embraced
The one right faith, that led them errless through
The mazy road of Nature on to Truth,
And from Truth's glorious temple up to God.

A Jovian Beauty.—Think not woman shines

With radiant beauty only in our world ;
Where'er God's creatures live, in countless globes,
Pure loveliness, the fire of soul that lights
The outer lineaments, doth burn and charm ;
And still the mantle, wove of gentleness,
Dyed with rich feeling, and all lined with love,
Falls brightest upon woman. Calm she sat,
Singing unto the lyre a hymn of praise ;
Sweet thought was throned upon her noble brow,
As if young Majesty, in trance of love,
Had carved a dream in marble : speaking mind
Illumed each feature cast in faultless mould—
A straight, fine profile, Greeks had doated on ;
Her eyes were large and azure ; chesnut locks
Streamed down her shoulders to her feet of snow.
Vestments, and floating robes of texture rich,
Adorned the stately Beauty of this sphere ;
And that strong love of costly ornament,
Marking the sex in all the peopled worlds,
She too displayed ; for precious jewels dug
From teeming Jovian mountains decked her wrists,
And white pearls gleamed around her whiter neck.
Oh, had this fair one lighted on our earth,
Fancy had hailed her a Minerva, sent

To flash high wisdom from her sparkling face,
A goddess and a mortal brightly mixed.

Boomed on the air the hoarse, deep toll of bells ;
For the sad iron tongue, death's preacher here,
Did syllable its name in this grand globe.
What though they lived a thousand years, that term,
E'en like our own brief span, would glide away.
Now did the great procession sweep along,
And the dark grave receive the Jovian dead.
Not as with us, no doubter sorrowed there,
For all believed soul's life, the mortal frame
But as a worn-out garment, worthless now—
The rough, crushed shell which held the spirit-pearl,
The cloud an instant drawn before the sun.
They knew the lost was lost not, but had clothed
Its loftier self with never-fading light,
Mounting the beam-lined sky, and finding heaven
Beyond those central stars—the clustering suns
We nightly view, yet scarcely may believe
Their glorious story—stars that charmed their eyes,
Filled them with hope, and lit the path to bliss ;
Stars, all the universe should watch and love.

THE IMMORTALS;

OR,

GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK X.

FAREWELL the lord of planets, and its calm
 Majestic sages! onward still they speed.
 Behold a world in grandeur next to Jove,
 The sage-perplexing marvel of the sky,
 Hanging in space, a beauteous mystery,
 Ringed with a glory, fair yet wonderful!
 Behold a world, slow-forming! (¹⁸) cast by God
 On the wide bosom of the ethery waste,
 Long ages orb'd and cooled, but passing still
 Thro' countless changes, like our globe of old:
 World, where no Eden yet hath smiled in flowers,
 Nor man, a living soul, awoke from clay;
 But monsters, wild and fearful, strange, immense,

Wander sole monarchs of the troubled scene,
While Nature, with her slow but errless hand,
Builds the high mountain, hollows out the vale,
And spreads the seas, for races yet unborn.

“ Spirit ! mark well this huge, unfinished globe !
Yet know, for countless ages, thine own star
Strove with like savage wildness, ere it grew
The thing of loveliness it now appears.
Earth’s swift-revolving and illumined belt,
Like Saturn’s circle, I remember well :
Parting, it dashed upon your shaken world,
Raising the Equator high, and settling there ;
And so will Saturn’s fall, ere man be placed,
Free of all danger, on its solid orb.”

“ How long, O angel ! ere this threatening ring
Will sink, as thou dost say, and leave the moons
Alone in silvery pride to light the globe,
And Saturn, now unpeopled, smile like earth ?”
“ The hour is chronicled in God’s great book ;
That hour may come a myriad ages hence—
Time long to thee, and yet a scarce-seen grain
Amid the sands of never-ending years.”

“ Oh, tell me what is meant by that dread word,
So oft pronounced on earth—eternity !”

“ Late child of clay ! as yet thou canst not grasp
The lengths and depths of passing, measured Time,
Much less the awful days that know no bound.
Countless as seem yon worlds, and all the suns,
Star-dust that strews the infinite abyss,
Mind can embrace them ; matter hath an end ;
But where is your beginning, ages gone ?
And thy long cycles who can measure out,
Eternity to come ?—Great King of heaven !
Who sittest on the throne those ages rear,
Thou only know'st what endless days may mean,
For Thou dost guide Time's rushing chariot-wheels
Along Creation's flaming mountain-tops.
In Thee the years began, from Thee they flow,
And they will close, if e'er they close, in Thee ;
For Thou dost mingle with eternity,
Yet not eternity can bow thy power,
Nor dread eternity exhaust thy love !”

The Angel paused, with face uplift to heaven ;
Devotion filled his bright, immortal eyes,

Now fixed in incommunicable thought.
 Strange splendour on him fell, rich-flooding down
 From some mysterious source; his form tower'd high,
 His wings spread out, an arch of amethyst;
 His hands were clasped in meekness, but his brow,
 Sublime and still, upturning to the stars,
 Flashed whitely with intolerable beams,
 As if his ardent feelings, lofty thoughts,
 All the outbreathing mind, were centred there.

The travellers passed the gulf to Herschel's star,*
 And outer Neptune—last and lonely link
 In the grand chain of worlds that gird the sun. (19)
 Faint grew the light, until the sun himself
 Lost all his golden wealth of torrid beams,
 And, like a king dethroned, put off his pomp,
 His diadem, his radiant robes of state,
 And sat dejected in the shadowy sky,
 With pale regret, and sullen discontent,
 Stamped on his coldly-waning, mournful brow.

Neptune and Uranus that, dim and far,
 Sweep their tremendous round—the babe on earth

* Uranus.

Is born, gains manhood, drops with silvery head,
 Like o'erripe fruit, into the waiting grave,
 Ere, their Spring past, another Spring arrives,
 To crown the slow-paced year. O worlds of frost!
 So we, blind mortals, cry, and bless our lot—
 Worlds of waste snow, and melancholy rain,
 And biting winds, and deep, enduring gloom,
 Far exiled from the beaming lord of day!
 If black Remorse did crave a dreary home,
 If hard Misanthropy would spurn mankind,
 And Sorrow weep her cankered heart away,
 They'd dwell in these benighted, joyless worlds.

Awake! renounce such error—mighty globes,
 Huge as a hundred earths, were never launched
 Majestic on the sky, and hung with moons, ⁽²⁰⁾
 Betokening foresight, care, and anxious love,
 Only to harbour pain—the lands of death.
 The pilgrims hovered o'er great Neptune's side,
 As he walked space, a Titan, laying bare
 His ancient bosom to the distant blaze.
 They saw how Wisdom, Mercy, triumphed here;
 How gloom and iron frost, though tyrants oft,
 Held no perpetual reign. When stole the beams,

Chilly and dim, across the waste of sky,
They pierced a dense and phosphorus-shining air,
That, glowing unconsumed, evolved a light
Genial as rays that bathe our own fair world ;
While cherished fires, within the globe's great heart,
Sent gently upward never-failing heat.

Yes, in deep wonder Earth's young traveller gazed
Along the equator, 'round the tempered zones ;
Fertility laughed there, and gaily spread
Her emerald robe o'er all the heathy plains,
Topp'd the high hills with forests, filled the vales
With blushing roses, golden daffodils ;
And Beauty trailed her sinuous, silver streams,
And oval'd oft her reed-marg'd, dimpling lake,
While happy, sportive beasts, and large-winged birds
Sailing the air, or thrilling it with song,
Gave life and cheerfulness to every scene.

Oh ! say not human races all distinct,
Their forms unlike, their destinies apart,
People the planets ; the same Being made
Each shapeful orb, and launched it round the sun.
The hill, the watered vale, the leafy wood,

The exalting grandeur of the solemn sea ;
 These all accord, in each fair world alike :
 Oneness pervades—an universal law—
 The map of Nature, and the map of man ;
 We're all affianced, breathe one common air ;
 All walk the globes with foreheads to the sky,
 All in our great Creator's image cast,
 All dying but to pass to endless life.

Thus Neptune, by kind laws illumed and warmed,
 Though ploughing depths so cold, so far away,
 Displayed each scene that charms the human sense.
 The busy palaced city humm'd with life :
 The brown - thatched hamlet, stragglng by the
 stream,
 Sent up blue wreaths of smoke o'er patriarch-trees ;
 The rustling corn-fields waved their golden pride ;
 The gallant vessel sailed the breezy deep ;
 Man toiled, pursued his pleasure, smiled or wept :
 Life's varied drama, as on earth, was played,
 Save the long year, the slow, slow journeying year
 Beyond our century marched, and mortals lived
 In Neptune, oldest of the planet-worlds,
 Long as the time great Babylon could boast

From founding Nimrod, till her towery pride,
And all her strength of ages, strewed the waste.

The Angel woke Bernardin from his dream
Of pleasing wonder, that the flowers of life
Bloomed in such distant fields. "Thou standest now
On thy proud System's outer, closing world,
Yet marvels lie beyond these seeming bounds.
Behold where comes, slow-moving up the void,
Diffuse, immense, yet lone and melancholy,
Yon comet wandering for a thousand years!"

"How awful is its aspect! even here,
Angel! I tremble, such dread mystery
Wraps the strange nature of these baneful stars;
Well may earth's children, shuddering, watch their course.
God maketh nought in vain—then why create
These useless terrors, threatening startled worlds?"

"Thou sayest well—God mouldeth nought in vain;
Comets perplex, their missions half unknown,
Hidden amid the wonders Nature shrouds
In her great workshop of the universe.
Man ever dreads the things in darkness veiled;

Thus comets awe his soul. They rarely spread
 Disaster in their wide, erratic flight ;
 Yet heaven at times doth send their filmy forms
 E'en as a deadly scourge. They pass near worlds,
 Poisoning their healthful air, and, with strong power,
 Drawing wide oceans over continents.
 So perished once thy earth, yet never more
 A comet will approach to drown thy race." (21)

“ Great angel ! I would pierce all mysteries,
 And grasp all wonders.”

“ Wait—thou art immortal ;
 Thou hast eternity to climb and learn.
 But ere we leave thy System, thou must see
 That marvel of all marvels formed of dust—
 That life-upholder—power of Nature's powers—
 King of the worlds—we must approach the sun.”

“ Will it not burn to ashes e'en my essence ?
 I shudder at its fierce and ceaseless fire.”

“ Ethereal substance can defy the flame,
 And safely dash through lightning—follow me !”

Back through the ethery waste the voyagers sped ;
They passed the comet, lagging soon behind ;
Meteors of silvery light, they flashed beneath]
Saturn's pale belt, and, swiftly winging o'er
The gulf of silence and cold solitude,
Threaded the yellow moons of mighty Jove.
The wandering starlets sang across their path ;
They heard the dash, where rolled on rocks of pearl
The seas, the Summer-seas, of happy Mars.
Sweeping near mountain'd Earth, they plainly saw
The fiery tops of Andes, and the snow
Pillaring the electric pole. Warm Venus' hills,
Alive, and brilliant with a million flowers,
Far back on ether breathed delicious scents,
As if her odorous soul still lingered there.
Then, leaving Mercury basking in the beam,
They paused before that glory, awing man,
God's mightiest, dreadest work—the wondrous Sun.

He trembled, as the Angel bade him look :
There glows no brighter, more terrific blaze,
Save one, to which this splendour is a shade—
The light that veils thy brow, Omnipotence !
He trembled, while conducted through the gates

Of pure electric flame, and lightnings streamed
 Continuous, up the incandescent air ;
 He trembled as he reached the solid globe ;
 Nought there resembled earth—all, all most strange :
 Wonder, the child of Terror, hushed his voice ;
 And as he saw the Angel's shining form
 Dilate with pride, as if that awful scene
 Inspired no dread, but only lofty thought,
 He bowed, and hid his face, and trembled more.

Mysteries there are man's soul shall never solve :
 Not all the wisdom he hath hived on earth,
 Not all his dreams, his gazings on the heavens,
 Since first the Asian watched the fields of sky,
 Have read the inscrutable, the wondrous laws
 That govern Day's grand orb. How virtue dwells
 In matter unendowed with will or life,
 Swaying the planets that must ever bend
 Vassals before his throne : how luminous clouds,
 Electrical, and white with active heat,
 Gird all his mighty body, while beneath
 The unmelting, labouring, massive globe revolves
 Stupendous on its axis ;* how those clouds

* The sun rotates on his axis in 25 days and 7 hours.

Thrill the thin ether, brilliant wave on wave
Flashing the beam through cheered immensity,
And onward still, beyond the planets' range,
Beyond the comets', till the glimmerings fall
Faintly on other suns; and this full blaze
Evolved unceasing, unconsumed, undimmed,
Through the long lapse of ages baffling thought—
Oh, all are marvels fearful as sublime!
Man, lost, perplexed, doth own the lofty truths,
Thinks deeply, speculates, weaves fancies wild,
And, weaving fancies, drops into the grave.

The guardian angel led earth's pilgrim on,
The place to him familiar as a home;
And each new wonder, wonder followed still.
It was not solitude that 'round them spread,
For beings mortal-limbed, with brows of light,
Walked thoughtfully those radiant solar plains; ⁽²³⁾
It was no land of woe, no penal realm,
For, roofed by clouds high-arched above the sphere,
Screening the electric fires that blazed without,
Beauty prevailed, and coolness, and sweet winds,
While brooks were seen, and many-coloured trees,
And golden flowers that breathed of Eden's fields,

And valleys hung with thick, melodious shade,
 And mountain-paths that led to still retreats.
 O God, thou dost delight in all things fair,
 And rich, and beautiful, and fraught with joy,
 And thus thy goodness fills e'en suns with life—
 Suns which are resting-places, gardens bright,
 For angels and thy Ministers, who sweep
 World-covered space to bear thy holy will—
 The home of beings higher raised than man,
 The linking lands between the humbler globes
 They sway and lighten, and thy glorious heaven.

They stood upon a mountain in the sun,
 A pinnacle o'ertopping Teneriffe,
 As pyramids outsoar a cotter's home.
 While mused the two on that high, radiant hill,
 Viewing far off a wide-spread solar sea,
 Heaving cool waves upon a silvery shore,
 A glory slowly glided down the air;
 And now a dazzling form beside them stood :
 Great majesty made calm his noble brow,
 The stern and grand soft blent with loveliness :
 Benevolence and wisdom filled his eyes ;
 His ruby-coloured wings were folded up,

Flashing no more red splendour, and his feet
Shone golden fire, but burnt not flowers beneath.
He looked a god, yet, with kind, placid face,
Seemed, while so mighty, gentle as a saint.

Such was the immortal ruler of the sun,
And all the suns boast rulers like to him,
Appointed to their lofty trusts by Heaven,
And granted power o'er solar elements.
That radiant being knew the angelic guide,
And bade him hail, and welcomed both with smiles.
He pointed upwards with his dazzling hands,
Where clearly shone, through rifts of gorgeous clouds,
The Pleiad glories in the outer blue;
Those lovely orbs woke dreams of distant heaven;
And all knelt down to worship on the hill,
And waft their prayers to that far Eden-Land,
Blessing its mighty Monarch. Then they rose,
And the sun's bright-crowned lord, with kind farewell,
Embraced them both, and went his shining way.

“Soul, thou hast traversed thy wide System now,
The glowing counterpart of Systems spread
Like dust in yonder depths. Say, wilt thou mount,

And trace new world on world—new sun on sun,
 And slake thy thirst for knowledge at the wells
 Infinitude supplies? or wilt thou pass
 Straightway across the void, bright-bridged by beams,
 And join Earth's loved ones in the realms of peace?"

Bernardin mused with fixed and downcast eyes,
 Then spoke in low-breathed tones :

“The works of God
 Are wondrous, beautiful, and well may raise
 Awe, and devotion, and transcendent thoughts ;
 But something tells me now, not wisdom's wealth,
 Grandeur that dazzles, glories that exalt,
 But sympathy and feeling are the springs
 Of inward pleasure, peace, and perfect joy.
 Our human souls draw bliss from other souls ;
 In splendid solitude we tire and mourn ;
 I feel my finite powers e'en now o'ertasked,
 And sigh for humbler objects, mind's repose :
 Blest Angel, hear me ! guide my feet to rest !
 Lead me to her, the loving, pure, and good !
 For her dear presence, and the pardoning smile
 Of Him we worship, great Creation's lord,

Gladly I'll turn from Nature's glorious face,
Her countless beauties, dread sublimities ;
For these, surveyed through everlasting years,
Would scarcely fill with bliss the craving heart.
I once deemed rapture lay enshrined in depths
Of science, thought, and proud philosophy,
And burned to pass eternity among
The flaming orbs seen dimly from our world ;
But now, though Nature, knowledge, yield their joy,
I feel, I feel, the greatest joy is love,
True rapture centering all in love and God."

THE IMMORTALS;
OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

BOOK XI.

How many fear to image to their souls
The bright eternal land, but live content
With shadowy hopes, and vague, unmeaning dreams!
They shrink as 'twere too bold to lift their gaze
Up yon blue heights, and say heaven lieth there,
That angels wing the broad cerulean calm,
Visit the stars, and our glad, beauteous Earth.
They reverence God, and think that angels live,
But dare not give them an abiding home.
Man hath his home, the beast and bird have homes;
Shall spirits, then, have no high dwelling-place,
But homeless wander through the universe,
The orphan-exiles of eternity?

Shall Deity, though filling earth and sky,
Have no peculiar home?—Oh, dust we are,
Yet Mind declares, in yon starr'd ether-depths
A heaven exists, not vapourous, built of dreams,
Floating on nothing and on nothing based,
But a grand, real, and resplendent realm,
For beings of celestial substance formed,
Teeming with beauties, stored with all things bright,
Proud centre of creation, world of worlds,
A sphere of glory, while a home of joy.

O man, that strainest all thy powers to grasp
Poor tinsel honours in this gaudy world,
Knowing how brief their glitter: who dost build
Gay, sumptuous palaces for weeds at last
To choke the marble halls, and owls to sit
Hooting on broken pillars through the night;
Who rearest pyramids with hopes as high,
To dare the worst that giant Time can do;
But lo! with surly, sure, and ruthless power,
Stone after stone he wears, and topples down,
Then points at pride's eternity, and laughs:
Who spreadest mighty cities, quick with life,
Fill'st them with all things costly 'neath the sun,

With gold of Ophir, gems, and Indian wealth,
While chariots roll, and Pleasure wakes her lyre ;
Ah ! vain—the ages sweep ; the Spoiler comes ;
She pours her vial out ; she striketh down
Art's great creations, trampling pomp in dust.
Now India's wealth, swift chariots, Pleasure's harp,
The hero's wreath, the monarch's dazzling throne,
Have shrunk into a mound where peasants stray,
And vacant whistle o'er unshapen stones,
And plovers cry, and build among the grass,
While Evening suns smile faintly as in grief,
And the cold moon makes stillness e'en more still.

Yes, man, this doom awaits thy works and thee
Stern truth doth preach it in unwilling ears ;
Nought stands unchanged, nought conquers time on earth.
Then burst the fetters that would chain thy hopes,
Thy soul's ambition, to this lower world,
And let them, like freed eagles, soar away.
Strive for those honours crowning virtue's brow,
In lands where wreaths are fadeless as the stars ;
Where joy and love are soul's great pyramids
Of everlasting strength, and endless date :
Aspire to palaces, whose jasper walls

Will ne'er grow dim, or crumble in decay,
Death never entering there to sadden hearts.
Think of the cities, not like ours upreared
Of perishable stone, but built by hands
Whose touch imparts an immortality—
Built on the eternal plains beyond those suns,
Whose silver-shining radiance lights them up;
Cities, whose dwellers flock from countless stars,
To join the angel-hosts that never fell;
Cities, whose loveliness still grows with time,
Where beauty, glory, unconceived by clay,
Fold all things like a brilliant, circling air;
Beauty and glory, the wide-beaming smile
Of the great Father of eternity.

She died in green Madeira; on her grave,
Not sweeter, brighter, than her virtues shone,
The rose and violet bloomed; they loved the spot,
As if her beauty and her goodness lent
The very sod a sanctity and charm.
Cecile, when freed from earth's eclipsing shade,
And entering, robed in beams, the immortal land,
Might not her meeting keep in that lone vale,
Where first her eyes unclosed, and first she loved,

But guardian angel-arms received her soul.
Go, mount yon hill, when heaven displays no cloud,
And our worn, weary planet turns her side
On ether's bed to sleep, while watchful stars,
With golden lamps, light soft her deep repose ;
Then wilt thou see—awaking brightest thoughts—
The line of beams down-quivering from the orb,
The loveliest of the Pleiads ; up that road,
Which led to Eden-Land through stars and suns,
The angels bore the spirit of Cecile.

A vision shines upon our mortal gaze—
The arms celestial are outstretched in love,
And there the gentle spirit trustful rests,
Silently rising through the liquid blue—
Rests like an infant cradled in our world,
Dreaming of those bright bowers the Mother's lips
Have early painted to its wondering heart,
The sinless bowers of far-off paradise.
The wings arch widely o'er the ascending soul,
As though they would protect some fragile thing,
Fragile yet precious, and the travelling beams,
From distant suns, fall mellowing on the group,
Wrapping each form in softest, golden haze.

Oh, those meek, joy-lit eyes are raised to eyes
That beam encouraging and tender light !
Her brow, on which no earthly shadow rests,
Glow with a holy ecstasy of thought,
Glow with a conscious immortality.
The ethereal form, that ne'er again shall fade,
Shines forth, by God's preserving, powerful law,
A glorious likeness of the gentle clay
That once moved beautiful in our lower world.
The face is young Cecile's ; those features wear
All, all their mortal sweetness, but assume
Expression more exalted, beaming too
With smiles more heavenly-bright than smiles on earth.
And there she leans upon the angelic arms,
Borne up the azure by those guardian Powers ;
She sighs not for earth's scenes now left behind,
Bound for a land more lovely, more sublime ;
She mourns not for the hearts that mourn her flight ;
'Tis but a moment, and again they'll meet
In starry halls, and everlasting bliss.

She mounts, her burning feelings all unquenched,
And all earth's tender memories active still.
But 'midst her longings for the eternal shores,

She yearns o'er one dear image—one loved voice
Ringing remembered music in her ear.
Oh, where is he—her own in mortal hours,
Who soothed her couch of death—and yet not death,
Only a vista to more lofty life ;
Who wept her exit to the bowers of bliss,
And sighed so sadly as she passed from earth—
That sigh the last dear sound she caught below,
Lingering upon the air, and drawing back
Her last, long glances, till they turned above,
And fixed upon the angels, and the skies.

She goes before, yet feels the time will come
When their departed lots once more will blend,
Like the smooth Summer-waves the ship may cleave,
Joining again in brightness, and in peace.
Oh, hastening, blest reunion ! surely God
Smiles on a love so faithful, pure as theirs ;
For his bright throne is built on holy love ;
His laws, though changing not, are breathed in love ;
Wide space is decked with globes upheld by love,
And love divine will rule the eternal years.

Her hands are crossed upon her hopeful breast,

Her eyes seem momentarily to beam more bright,
As though they drank fresh lustre from each star
The seraphs bear her past. Fair child of earth !
Sweet daughter of a prized yet erring race !
Dear spirit wakened to new life and bliss !
Saved by the power that will not crush the frail,
The mercy that exalts the lowly heart—
Ascend, blest soul ! ascend, young loving saint !
Speed thee to heaven ! an amaranthine crown
Waits in the skies, to wreath thy spotless brow.

The Angel and his charge had left the sun ;
They plunged through ether till the planets looked,
With all their tossing oceans, and high hills
Sublime with storm and thunder, but as sparks,
Or silver dew-drops on the fields of sky ;
Those drops waned fainter, fainter, then were lost ;
The thirsty depths of space had drunk them up ;
And the fierce sun himself had cooled his brow,
The royal giant, with his shafts of flame,
Dwarfed to a common, twinkling, tiny star.

And now they paused—not wearied with their flight
O'er that stupendous gulf, but paused to gaze

More calmly on the glory, strange, immense,
Fast widening in the sky, as other worlds
Shrank off remote, and paled their feebler fires.
They halted in a star, the last that moved
In vassal beauty 'round the sun of suns,
Placed haply there that spirits might alight,
And meditate awhile, and calm their thoughts,
Humbly preparing for the last great scene,
The entrance of that land God fills with smiles,
The land of glory, melody, and joy,
The Paradise of beatific rest.

'Twas on an opal terrace flushed with beams,
While brightly 'round the rich-rayed Pleiads burned,
The Immortals stood ; their late wide-spreading wings,
That swept the ether-waves like oars of flame,
Lay moveless and unruffled at their sides ;
So peace will follow passion. On the winds,
Soft-blowing, and impregnate with perfume,
Floated their locks, each hair a line of gold ;
Their foreheads beamed with thought ; their radiant
limbs,
Immortal, yet as mortals' graceful shaped,
Glowed pure as veinless marble, with a blush

Falling upon them from the roseate heavens ;
Their eyes, fixed steadfastly on worlds afar,
Flashed self-lit splendour—eyes no art might paint,
Brilliant yet soft, and full of issuing mind—
Eyes we might fancy liquid diamonds, blent
With tempering melted pearls, still open wide,
And drinking in the gorgeous, wondrous scene—
Eyes, like the worlds they gazed on, doomed to shine
With pure, unclouded ray, for evermore.

The angelic pilgrims in deep silence mused,
But he, late mortal, slowly stooped his head
Before the blaze of that grand fount of beams,
And, lost in fervid worship, clasped his hands.

The realms of beauty and eternal Spring
Shone distant still athwart the crystal sky,
Yet their fine vision pierced the abyss between ;
And plainly now, entranced, enrapt, they saw
The holy mountains and the vales of peace,
The rivers with their shores of lucid pearl,
The trees of life, and never-dying flowers,
While the thin, radiant ether bore across
The parting void, distinct to spirit-ears,

Pulsations of rich music, floods of song—
Such man ne'er heard in grosser earthly air—
Music soft-floating from those spheres, to tell
Not only Glory built her palace there
Of starry wonder, and unfading pomp,
But Joy sat ever at the feet of God.

The lofty Angel touched his bending charge,
And raised him from his knees. The child of earth
Heard eagerly the Immortal, as he strove
To unfold the mysteries of the eternal state,
And shadow faintly forth the abode of bliss,
Which lay in prospect, like a golden dream
Blessing a saint's calm slumbers. Fear and doubt
Oppressed him not, but boldness, sprung from trust,
Upheld his soul, and peace diffused its calm,
While some compelling influence seemed to draw
His strong desires to that celestial land.

Then rose the thought that she, the fond and loved
In mortal moments, waited for him there—
Waited beside the glass-clear founts of life,
Or her fair, shining forehead wreathed with flowers,
Born of the beams in vales that knew no night.

Impatient fancy saw his dear Cecile,
Lovely as when she died on that sweet shore
Lashed by earth's ocean-waves. Her very face
Seemed smiling there, all soul, all joy, all peace;
The very thoughts that warmed her human heart,
Love for her God and him, illumed her eyes.
Yes, there she bent, that fond, expectant saint,
In voiceless worship, sweetest quietude,
Happy, yet knowing still more joy would come,
The meek, the trusting, and the beautiful.

O picture blest that drew his mental gaze,
And fanned his eagerness to wildest flame!
He rose—he spread his arms—his longing heart
Was stirred by strong impatience, till he shook
E'en like the aspen touched by Evening's breeze,
Trembling with tender pleasure; and his eyes
Turned yearningly to that far glorious land,
As though its light were life. Then, brow all
smiles,
Stood forth the angel ready to renew
The flight across the sky. Outlaunching swift,
The two, on meteor-pinions, sped their way,
Cleaving the yielding, surge-like, azure calm,

And every moment, lightnings to them slow,
Nearing the Eden of the universe.

We close the scene ; we follow not their course ;
Too bright, too holy, is celestial ground
For mortal foot to tread ; while linked to dust,
'Twere better humbly wait, believe, and hope.
When life's thick shades depart—for life is night,
Truth's open day will flash on raptur'd mind,
Revealing all we burn to know and see ;
Mystery now curtains close those hallowed realms,
And Reverence lowly bends, and hides her face.

Oh, the blest meeting of those faithful hearts !
Now did they find that knowledge, though the source
Of lofty bliss, and worthy deathless soul,
Is but as wintry ice which melts away
Before the Summer of celestial love ;
Now did they find the affections will survive
The wreck of things material—heaven's true flowers
Immortal in their beauty, doomed to blow
On the bright forehead of eternity.
The mem'ry of their human frailties past,
Care, sorrow, and the mortal body's pain,

Would but enhance their hallowed rapture now.
Oh! the fond meeting of those happy souls!
Their lot henceforth to roam this glorious world,
Beneath the smile of pleased Omnipotence;
To pluck the fruits of joy, not scant and crude,
As found on earth, but large, and rich, and ripe;
To press up wisdom's hills, soul taking in
Still widening views of wonder and of truth;
To bow together at the Eternal feet,
Defying death, and knowing that no more
Their day of happiness would wane to night,
Or love's bright rose one leaf of fragrance drop—
This was itself reward—itself a heaven.

Our lay has ceased; a mortal, blind and frail,
Hath dared from this low sphere, this darkened earth,
Ascend in thought, and, on weak, flagging wing,
Pierce skyey depths where roam angelic forms,
And the stars sing their golden-chiming hymns;
Hath dared, with reverential awe, to dream
In what far region, screened from mortal view,
Placed in the midst of Nature's vast expanse,
The home of souls, the abode of bliss may be.
O God, why hast thou dower'd weak creatures here

With the strong, restless wish to lift the veil
That shrouds the hidden, unconceptioned land,
If such a quenchless longing be a crime?
Why granted reason, if we may not use
Its searching powers that raise us o'er the brute?
Why given us fancy, if its eagle-wings
'Twere best to clip, and check each wish to soar
Above life's narrow walks, and fleeting scenes?

To long with ardour to behold God's worlds,
Sighing for loftier powers than bless us now;
To feed upon the wonders of His works
In matter and in spirit; to adore
The Father of all life, and, while we feel
This world of change is not our final home,
To mount in dreams made bright by joyous hope,
To yonder land of peace, and love, and bliss—
This is all worthy soul, the breath of God,
This is a proof of our immortal doom.

Thou central star, that beam'st so softly-pure,
Swaying the worlds, while pointing glory's home!
Ye angels, haunting earth and guarding man!
Bright paradise, that bloom'st in yon far depths!

Still let us dream of ye, still hail ye, truths,
Prized, golden truths, that hallowed music make,
Cheering our hearts, while journeying here below.
But all traced faintly on this transient page,
Is but a glimpse to soul's dim vision given,
Of the great mysteries filling earth and sky :
Such glimpse is like that narrow, crimson edge
Trembling around some dense and sable cloud,
Which hides the splendour of the setting sun ;
It draws the gaze, but only shines to tell
How brightly burns the glory, veiled behind.

THE IMMORTALS;
OR,
GLIMPSES OF PARADISE.

NOTES.

(¹). PAGE 12.

*What though God's Eden-land be far away,
He sends them thus to all the peopled worlds.*

We are authorised to believe, from numerous statements in Scripture, that spiritual Intelligences frequently visit the world we inhabit: in other words, that many beatified spirits are permitted by God, at certain seasons, to quit the regions of bliss, in order to traverse His immense empire, to investigate His glorious works, and perform offices of good in relation to creatures still in the mortal state. By the term spiritual Intelligences, we must be understood to mean the beatified souls of those once called mortals, as well as the happy beings never associated with perishing clay, but who were created at the first by God, pure, angelic existences, endowed with immortality.

(²). PAGE 14.

*Spirit is substance, or material things
Would bow not to its power.*

It is a common thing to hear individuals affirm that the human soul or spirit has no substance, form, or any thing akin to what

we term matter. They speak without reflection, for their assertion would reduce at once the soul of man to a mere thought or abstract idea. Now thoughts and ideas are simply effects; that is, they are emanations from some higher source, and cannot of themselves live, hope, sorrow, or rejoice. The soul, therefore, must be something beyond these—a subtile, ethereal essence, assuming shape, and endowed with every faculty necessary to a conscious being. All must admit that it will be as easy for Omnipotence to develop or expand the existing spiritual essence, giving it, though invisible to our grosser senses, form, symmetry, and independent capacity of motion, and to supply it with visual powers, and other modes of perception, as it was easy for Him to create the first corporeal visible man, and endow him with mortal organs.

Yet what the substance in reality may be which constitutes spirit, it would be hopeless to inquire. We know, however, that it must be something not subject to change or decay; and while superior to injury or accident, it must be endowed with intense vitality; a vitality inherent, and not bestowed for a season; a vitality which, unlike that of the perished frame, requires no support from without, itself constituting the essence of being: the former was organised for time; the latter has perceptive faculties for eternity: the one being a faint image of the divine Creator; the other (we speak of spirits virtuous and good) being a nearer likeness, with faculties sharpened, and endowments enlarged, as compared with those which it knew when united to clay, yet carrying forward, from the mortal to the immortal state, reason and memory, reflective powers and feelings, all that it once possessed or experienced, but now strengthened, refined, and exalted, with its own glorified and elevated nature.

(³). PAGE 15.

*Our air birds sail; a million times refined,
The blue abyss is swept by angel-plumes.*

It has been a point long disputed whether space be an utter vacuum, or pervaded by a subtile fluid which we term ether. The mind of man is incapable of forming an idea of an absolute "nothing," any more than it can grasp the conception of that which is infinite. That the Almighty, among other purposes, has

designed space as a medium for the transmission of light from world to world, is obvious; and if the "undulatory theory" of light be the correct one—a theory which supposes an agitation of the ether by electric bodies, wave forcing wave onward with incredible velocity—then must space be occupied by a substance, attenuated it is true, but still a material fluid, as proved by the fact that something is excited. If space, then, be pervaded by a subtile gaseous matter, no objection can be urged, on physical grounds, to the opinion that angelic beings easily traverse it; and from the rarity of this matter, it follows, that they may be enabled to move with a swiftness of which we can form no adequate conception.

(4). PAGE 18.

*Are their eyes dim with viewing new suns flame,
And old ones wane to darkness?*

Among the most extraordinary phenomena witnessed in the starry heavens, may be named the sudden breaking forth of new stars, and the disappearance of old ones. Several instances, well authenticated, are on record, which place the question beyond a doubt that the objects perceived were not meteors, but bodies stationed among the recognized stars. In 1572, Tycho Brahe detected a new star in the constellation Cassiopeia, "occupying a position which had previously been blank." It continued to increase in brilliancy, but after remaining visible for two years, it passed away, and has not again been seen. Herschel missed in succession several stars which had been located in certain places, according to the catalogues, for ages. During 1828, astronomers lost a star in Virgo (No. 42), and, by no efforts since, have they been able to discover it.

A satisfactory explanation of these mysterious occurrences has never been given. Whether the stars have appeared and disappeared, owing to the great eccentricity of their orbits, we seeing them only on their nearest approach to our System; whether new worlds have actually been created; or whether, on the other hand, the phenomenon indicates that the luminosity of some suns has indeed ceased, and that they are blotted out for ever from the face of Creation, as light-bearing bodies, it is not perhaps for man to decide. Yet who shall declare God's creative energy

at an end?—There is nothing unreasonable in supposing that still, from time to time, the Almighty summons into existence new suns with their accompanying newly-peopled Systems, as well as, in his infinite wisdom, he may deem it expedient to withdraw the light from some older luminaries, thus bringing their present economies and dispensations together with human existence, to a close.

(5). PAGE 49.

*Ye ken star-Islands, other Milky-Ways,
Complete with all their suns.*

It is now generally admitted by astronomers that the Nebular patches of faint light, most of them being resolvable by powerful telescopes into stars, are firmaments resembling in every respect our own Via Lactea (Milky-Way). So inconceivable is the gulf between them and our astral system, that Sir William Herschel is of opinion that light, flying at the rate of twelve millions of miles in a minute, would not reach us from the nearest of those *Nebulae* in a less period than twenty thousand years. Yet such are the all-comprehending laws of gravitation, that we cannot but believe a connexion exists between those remote firmaments and our own. They also must have their centres of gravity; they also, to maintain their respective distances, so that firmament shall not be drawn towards firmament, must revolve around superior *Nebulae*. In spite of the magnitude of the star-system seen through the constellation of Orion, there are the strongest reasons for believing that our Milky-Way is the most considerable of all the *Nebulae*; consequently those outer and remote Systems may preserve their equilibrium and harmony, by revolving around our mightier mass.

(6). PAGE 51.

*And 'mid the Pleiads shows the giant star,
Whose power, wide-issuing, sways the universe.*

It by no means follows that the Central Sun, in order to control the motions of the surrounding luminaries, must of necessity exceed in magnitude all other globes combined, in the same proportion that our own sun surpasses in mass the united attendant

planets. The law obtaining in our Solar System may only be partially carried out, as regards the aggregate of the worlds. We find the multiple stars revolving around each other, without the presence of a greatly preponderating mass; and we have only to apply their economy to the worlds at large, to be convinced how the Creator may have balanced the entire universe. We contend, however, that a point has been found around which all the suns, composing our Milky-Way, revolve: that point is occupied, as Professor Mædler has demonstrated, by Alcyoné, a precedence and an unquestionable importance being thus given to the star so situated. At the same time, astronomers adduce facts to show that the magnitude of Alcyoné immensely exceeds the magnitude of our own sun, and also many times that of the great stars Aldebaran and Sirius.

(?). PAGE 52.

The Paradise of angels and of souls.

That the celestial paradise is located in the heavens far above or beyond our world, Scripture everywhere intimates. We know that it must be somewhere, and the interesting and important subject ought to engage our solemn attention. Dr. Thomas Dick, in his beautiful and truly Christian work on "The Future State," referring to the discovery of a Central Sun, remarks that, from its singular position and consequent importance and splendour, it may indeed be the spot appointed by God for the dwelling-place of beatified spirits, and where He may display his own peculiar glory. We can scarcely proceed so far as this; but, with a reverence due to the subject, we may venture, without presuming to specify any particular world actually *visible* in the heavens, to suggest the extreme probability that the *centre* of the Almighty's universe would be chosen by Him as the fitting seat of the celestial Eden. The Pleiades having been proved to occupy such a centre, it follows that *near these glorious worlds, or among them*, the happy region may be situated. For any thing we know to the contrary, vast masses, or opaque terraqueous globes, may exist in proximity to this group of suns; a group on which no one can gaze without being struck by its extraordinary configuration and beauty. Paradise, however immense the region, and though it were illumined by one hundred

suns (the Pleiad-group contains in reality more than that number), would not be visible to us, by reflected light, at such an immense distance. It is indeed in accordance with all our ideas of lofty sanctity, that a place so holy and glorious should be concealed from the common gaze of mortals; yet, as we have stated, paradise must, if the Bible be true, have some location in space, and can any spot more august, more suitable, than the region named, be conceived by the finite mind?

(*) PAGE 53.

*The Central Sun is but a lamp that lights,
With smiles from God, the Eden-Land of souls.*

Alcyoné, the presumed Central Sun, is the principal member of the Pleiad-group. From the earliest ages, the singular assemblage of stars in the constellation of Taurus, called the Pleiades, has attracted the attention of astronomers. Their marked aspect, and, on a clear night, the appearance of their clustering apart from other stars, give them an interest and a significance irrespective of any other circumstance. The ancients invented a beautiful story in connexion with these stars. The Pleiades were the seven daughters of King Atlas and Pleone; all, except the youngest, Merope, married immortals, and were raised to heaven to shine as a constellation. Merope, at her death, was also raised to share the honours of her six sisters, only that she exhibited far less lustre than they. It is indeed difficult to discover her star in the group without the aid of a glass. Thus Merope, for marrying a mortal, has been called the "lost Pleiad." The other six present a beautiful spectacle. The ancients imagined the Pleiad-group to be composed of these seven stars, but, under a telescope of no great power, more than one hundred can be perceived, some possibly being smaller bodies, others ranged further back in space, but all comprised within a compass so small, that they might be covered by the moon when at her full. This extraordinary cluster of stars, while its picturesque form charms the spectator, suggests the idea that some cause exists for such a close aggregation of suns. It is no ordinary group; it is unique in the heavens; and if it be proved the central point of the universe, and that those suns have some office to serve, beyond all other created luminaries, then we shall regard the Pleiades with

an interest never felt for them by the ancients—an interest ever increasing as the subject is studied, and we contemplate their importance and beauty.

(⁹). PAGE 61.

'Round the grand sun of suns, the Central World.

If our sun, which, according to Sir William Herschel, is situated somewhat *within* the great stratum of stars composing the Milky-Way, occupies, in making one revolution around its companion star in Hercules, an immense period of time, and a longer period again in moving with its fellow around the Central Sun, then the suns, forming the outer belt of the Milky-Way, will occupy periods proportioned to their distances, in their orbital progress around the same Central World. The cycle, named in the text, may be supposed that point of time when all the suns shall have performed one or more revolutions around the great centre of gravity where Alcyoné is situated.

(¹⁰). PAGE 65.

*For quiverings e'en of feeble song on earth
Cease not, tho' mortals may believe they cease,
Thrilling deep space for ever.*

The hypothesis that sound, once commenced, has no cessation, the vibrations, however diffused or slight they become, continuing to be vibrations even beyond our atmosphere, may with difficulty win belief, yet is it based on absolute physical laws. The theory would intimate that the waves of sound will as certainly pass through the great spaces which separate star from star, as will undulations of light. We have no perception of such minute waves of sound, because our organs of hearing are far less delicately formed than our organs of vision. Nevertheless angelic Intelligences may be endowed with an acuteness which we, at present, do not possess: and their capability of being affected by the slightest vibrations of ether, that shall have travelled for millions of miles, may be one of those beautiful and astonishing truths which appear to us, in our imperfect organization, little else than poetic dreams and fables.

(11). PAGE 151.

*But cloudless, herbless, streamless, blackly lay
In arid desolation.*

Did any atmosphere or water exist in the moon, we should not fail to detect their presence. The stars are occulted by the moon without any refraction of their rays, disappearing and re-appearing instantly; this would not be the case if an atmosphere, even of a few miles in height, enveloped the satellite: also no vapour has ever been seen staining the vitreous plains, or passing around its lofty mountains. The atmospheres of Jupiter and Mars, globes comparatively so distant, are easily discoverable, and in the latter the seas are plainly traced. No forms of life, with which we are acquainted, could exist on the surface of the moon; but Nature for once may be contented to resign a globe to barrenness and solitude, in consideration that it has so many important and beneficial offices to serve in connexion with our superior world.

(12). PAGE 154.

*Wrapping most worlds, the changeful air alone
Tempers the solar heat, and cools or warms.*

The moon which never has, nor can be inhabited, on account of the absence of a life-supporting air, may scarcely be called a world in the sense we usually apply to that term, as meaning a habitable globe. A common notion prevails that the nearer the planet is to the sun, the greater degree of heat it receives. This, however, is a fallacy. It is not proximity to the solar orb, but the nature of the atmosphere on which the planet's temperature mainly depends. The aeronaut who, in Summer time, mounts to a great height, and when no clouds intercept the beams of the sun, is frozen in his baloon; while on the highest peaks of the Andes, the snow never melts. These facts alone prove to the most ordinary observers, that the rarer the atmosphere is the lower must be the temperature. Mercury, though but thirty six millions of miles from the sun, may be provided with an atmosphere so pure and rare, and yet suited to every description of life, that the planet probably is as cool and pleasantly genial as Jupiter, which moves at a distance rather more than five times that of the earth, from the

source of heat. If one thing evinces design, on the part of the Creator, more than another, it is the adaptation of rare and dense atmospheres to the respective positions of globes, for the purposes of vegetable and animal existence.

(13). PAGE 161.

The deep-green sea impresses on the land.

Viewed through a good telescope, the green tints of the seas can be discerned on the surface of Mars, in beautiful contrast with the rosy colour of the land.

(14). PAGE 161.

Like warmer Venus, Mars doth echo Earth.

No other planet, in all its features and economy, bears so striking a resemblance to our earth as Mars. Its mass is considerably less, yet the distribution of land and water, of mountain and valley, nearly approaches that prevailing on our own globe. It revolves on its axis in twenty-four hours, thirty-nine minutes : its atmosphere being a little more dense than ours, the temperature, probably, at the surface of both planets, is much the same. Unlike Jupiter which, owing to the very slight inclination of its axis, has scarcely any diversity of seasons, the seasons of Mars are as marked as our own. The white belts of snow at the poles are distinctly apparent, and their gradual diminution can be watched, as the Summers come on. No moon has yet been discovered, the small size of the satellite, in all probability, and its proximity to the planet, baffling astronomers in their endeavours to detect it.

(15). PAGE 164.

*As if Omnipotence, in moulding worlds,
Could wander into error.*

Much mystery attaches to the numerous diminutive bodies, called asteroids, which are found between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The diameter of one of the largest, Pallas, has been computed at 670 miles, that of Vesta, 290, while Flora, and some of the others, are so small, that their diameters are thought not to exceed 100 miles. The mean distance of their orbits from the

sun—their moving in a tract of heaven where, according to Bode's law of distances, a great planet ought to be situated—and the near approximation of those orbits at the point of intersection, seem almost to countenance the opinion of Olbers, that the asteroids are the remains of a large world shivered to pieces by some internal force, in ages long past. But one consideration is fatal to such a conjecture. The great Architect of Nature has never failed in the formation of the mightiest sun. Shall He here alone show Himself less than Omnipotent? shall He resemble a mortal in being compelled to suffer the work of His hands to become a ruin and a wreck? The asteroids, we believe, are the result, not of an accident, but have been created thus minute for some purpose man is unable to comprehend. The number now known of these extraordinary "miniature worlds," from the first one announced by Piazzi in 1801, to the last detected by our distinguished countryman, Mr. Hind, is very large, and almost every year brings a fresh discovery.

(1⁶). PAGE 167.

The crown of all your System.

Jupiter has ever been considered the monarch of the Planets. It is difficult for us to realise the fact that an apparently small brilliant point in our evening skies is a moon-attended globe, no less than eighty-eight thousand miles in diameter, and which would make one thousand three hundred worlds like our own. Some have argued that gravitation is so powerful in Jupiter, that if any human beings exist there, they must, when they endeavour to move, do so with extreme difficulty, the attractive influence rooting them, as it were, to the spot; and this physical inconvenience has been adduced as a strong presumption that the planet is uninhabited. But it requires little argument to show that the difficulty named will be entirely overcome, if man be endowed there with muscles more vigorous than we possess on earth. Indeed, it is rational to conclude that both in size and bodily power, the Jovian inhabitant will be adapted to his planet. The human races, throughout all the worlds, we may safely believe, present a family likeness. Man is created in the image of his divine Maker; yet as Mercury differs in magnitude from our earth, and the last from Jupiter and Uranus, why should not the

inhabitants of each planet possess a like diversity, as regards strength and size, though the distinctive formation of features, bodily shape, and adjustment of limbs, be precisely similar ?

(¹⁷). PAGE 168.

*Theirs it was to live
A thousand years in unbowed majesty.*

Reasoning from analogy, we may infer that the Creator has proportioned the length of life, enjoyed by his creatures, to the duration of the seasons, or the solar years of the respective worlds. Thus the term of life in Mercury, whose year is about a fourth part of our own, may be twenty of our Summers; while in Jupiter the inhabitants shall be permitted, on an average, to see seventy revolutions of their planet around the sun, extending over a period not far short of nine hundred terrestrial years.

(¹⁸). PAGE 171.

Behold a world slow-forming.

Some modern astronomers have announced that the rings of Saturn are composed of millions of separate small meteors. But the accepted opinion is that they are formed of continuous matter. The rings have been prominently put forward by the advocates of the Nebular Hypothesis as affording strong evidence of its truth. According to the theory of the elder Herschel, and Laplace, the outer planets were first cast off from the sun, and condensed; consequently they are the oldest bodies. Be this as it may, the Creator probably has willed that some globes should occupy far longer periods than others, in arriving at a condition suitable for the abode of human beings. The extraordinary appendage to Saturn (for rings have never been detected surrounding any other planet), would seem to intimate that the globe is still in process of condensation, having thrown off those flat circles during its rapid axial rotation; in all probability the planet goes on decreasing in volume; for it is rather remarkable that its mean density (half the weight of water) is less than that of any other body, comets excepted, in the System.

That our world, at some remote period, possessed a ring or rings similar to those of Saturn, we have reason to suspect; there

is surplus matter all around the earth's equator, forming a graduated elevation of thirteen miles beyond what the equatorial regions would be, were our globe a perfect sphere; hence the diameter at the equator exceeds that at the poles, by twenty-six miles. This may be the first suggestion offered that the elevation, above named, is attributable to our earth's primitive rings, and we are aware that such elevation has been regarded as an effect of centrifugal force, derived from the earth's rapid revolution on its axis, when in a less dense state than at present; but the accumulation at the equator may, we think, with as much reason be ascribed to the disruption of the once encircling rings, which, falling on our planet, would be heaped around the equatorial regions.

A further argument that Saturn's belts will eventually be broken up, is supplied by the fact that he is attended by so numerous a retinue of moons. The light which the rings derive from the sun, and throw upon Saturn's surface, must be very considerable, and did the Creator design them to be permanent, their luminosity might suffice the inhabitants during their brief night of five hours, without the presence of moons. But the seven moons seem to have been created in anticipation of the catastrophe adverted to, when, with its brother worlds, Saturn's time shall have come to support, unthreatened by danger, rational beings.

(19). PAGE 174.

Last and lonely link

In the grand chain of worlds that gird the sun.

It is very improbable that another planet revolves beyond the orbit of Neptune, for some future Le Verrier or Adams to discover. The mean distance of Neptune from the sun (three thousand millions of miles) being more than thirty times that of the earth from the same luminary, the solar disc must appear from the planet's surface dwindled down to a mere point; and, presuming Bode's law correct, if another planet exist, it must be situated at nearly double the distance of Neptune from the sun, or in a region of space where our sun's attraction would certainly be too feeble to control the motions of a solid body, the subtile matter of comets alone obeying the weakened solar force.

(20). PAGE 175.

Majestic on the sky, and hung with moons.

That one moon only has been discovered in attendance on Neptune, is no proof that several moons do not cheer the darkness of his nights. Neptune may be regarded as the oldest of the planets, as Mercury may be considered the youngest, if we follow the order that some astronomical theories prescribe. Far less in mass than Jupiter or Saturn, Neptune is nevertheless thirty-one thousand miles in diameter, and above one hundred times larger than our earth. That its surface is suited to vegetable life, and the life of sentient beings, we have no reason to doubt. A peculiar atmosphere of great density, on the principle before alluded to, may cause the sun's beams to develop light and caloric, however feebly those beams may shine there, so that Neptune is probably a world of great fertility and beauty.

We have considered Saturn, arguing from the presence of its yet unfallen rings, as in a state of transition, preparing for the reception of human beings. It was at first suspected that Neptune possessed a ring, and Professor Challis and Mr. Lassell thought they could perceive traces of it; but the idea of its existence is now, we believe, quite abandoned. The appendage of rings, then, not being discovered in connexion with Neptune, and resembling in several points our own world, we may fairly conclude that this magnificent globe is no wilderness, created without aim or purpose, but that it supports on its surface a race of beings endowed with intellect and reason. If we carry out the theory before named, in relation to the term of life assigned by God to his creatures, then must we suppose the inhabitants of Neptune favoured with length of days beyond any patriarch we read of in Sacred Writ. The summer of Neptune comes around but once in 164 of our years; and we can scarcely imagine that the Almighty would create beings to witness only one solar year of their world; consequently man, if permitted to live even for twenty of Neptune's summers, would attain to an age equivalent to about three thousand of our years.

(21). PAGE 179.

*Yet never more
A comet will approach to drown thy race.*

After the first miracle of creation, the Almighty appears to have been pleased ever to work out his purposes by natural means; therefore, other causes assisting in bringing about the deluge, as stated in Scripture, both physical laws and the Sacred Narrative may allow the supposition, that one of the larger comets was once permitted to pass so near the surface of our earth as to raise, by attraction, a tidal wave. That these mysterious bodies concerning which, in reality, so little is known, however attenuated their gaseous matter may be, possess a certain substance and weight, is beyond dispute. Consequently, though their influence on solid bodies, when placed at some considerable distance from them, may have escaped detection, they must possess attractive power. The tidal wave, raised by this large comet on its near approach to the earth, may have exceeded in volume any that could be elevated by the moon: it might have swept over the land, and covered many of the hills. Thus it may be said, in the language of the Mosaic narrative, that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up." A body of water might in this manner have been drawn from the Atlantic ocean over Southern Europe, and all the Western parts of Asia might have been submerged. The waters, after the passage of the comet, would, of course, retreat to their former beds.

(22). PAGE 182.

Walked thoughtfully those radiant solar plains.

If there be any truth in the statements and sublime deductions of Sir William Herschel, then we may well believe that our sun is inhabited. These are his words—"I think myself authorized, upon astronomical principles, to propose the sun as an inhabitable world, and am persuaded that the foregoing observations, with the conclusions I have drawn from them, are fully sufficient to answer every objection."—Electricity is the grand secret of the luminosity of this mysterious body, and as electric currents, under certain conditions, can never exhaust themselves, the solar light has a ceaseless endurance. Electric clouds in a state of

constant activity, passing our conception, encompass the entire orb; other strata of clouds, not luminous, appear to form a screen beneath, but at a considerable distance from the sun's solid body. The modern discovery of the extraordinary fact that several metals, well known in our planet, float in a burning vaporous state above the sun's surface, goes to confirm, we think, rather than overthrow the doctrine of continued electric action. These electric clouds, exerting all their influence outwards, permit the opaque body to remain in comparative shadow and coolness; vapours from the solar seas may also conduce to lower the temperature of the atmosphere. The spots, so frequently discovered on the sun's disc, are believed to be temporary removals of the surrounding luminous envelope, caused by excessive agitation, allowing the dark surface of the sun to be partially uncovered; thus the inhabitants may have occasional views of the outer universe, for in these openings shadow and darkness must, to a certain extent, prevail, so that the rays from the planets and other stars may shine through them.

It seems to be the will of the great Architect of Nature, that every portion of our own globe, both land and water, should teem with life; we can therefore with difficulty believe that He would permit so stupendous a world as the sun to be an unpeopled solitude. The power that created such a magnificent globe, is able certainly, in some way unknown to us, to render it inhabitable, and, while it exercises such important offices, controlling and vivifying all the planetary worlds, the same power can clothe it with natural beauty, and fill it with every form of life and intelligence.

APPENDIX.

THE CENTRAL SUN.

THE great modern discovery of a Central Sun being so frequently referred to in the preceding pages, and forming much of the subject-matter of the Poem, a few additional observations regarding it may not be inopportune.

Up to a comparatively recent period, an idea prevailed that our sun is fixed in space, merely rotating on his axis; also that the stars, with the exception of the few planets constituting our System, are immovable. Suns, these stars were acknowledged to be, each probably attended by its retinue of planets, satellites, and comets, but still they were thought to maintain for ever unaltered stations in the sky.

The first public announcement by Sir William Herschel, although Bradley and Halley had previously thrown out suggestions, that our sun has a proper motion in space, carrying along with him the planets and comets, was received with little favour by contemporary astronomers. But that eminent man, no more than his successor, his equally eminent son, was not a visionary; he never made statements unsupported by proof. The gradual widening or spreading out of stars towards the

North, as compared with the stations they held in the catalogue made by Hipparchus two thousand years ago, and the drawing together, or closing up, of those located in the South, convinced him that our sun's progress is in a Northern direction. Recent investigations and discoveries have corroborated his views, and confirmed the truth of his bold theory, placing his then doubted declaration among the great facts of the age.

The labours of Argelander, who selected five hundred stars situated in all parts of the heavens, so that, by their apparent motions, the sun's proper motion might be detected, and the confirmation which the celebrated astronomer, Otho Struve, gave to the results obtained—all go to prove that our System is progressing through space towards a star in the constellation Hercules. Whether that star be our companion sun, which also, at that immense distance, may be performing a revolution around ourselves, the pair having hundreds of counterparts, called binary stars, is a question yet to be decided.

Under any circumstances, the orbit we are describing is one of a stupendous nature. Such of the members of the double and multiple stars whose orbits have been computed, perform revolutions around each other in periods varying from half a century to two thousand years, although one of the pairs of the quadruple star in the constellation of the Harp, requires, as estimated from their distances, a period not far short of a million of years. From very close calculations which cannot greatly err, our sun, with his attendant planets, is found to be sweeping through space at the rate of one hundred and thirty three millions of miles every year; yet a single revolution around this distant world located in Hercules, will occupy a period greater than that required by the stars in the constellation of the Harp. Can it be that one revolution has yet been performed? Geology alone may return an answer; and the immense antiquity which she gives to the Earth seems to indicate that the revolution has been performed several times, since the Almighty condensed our planet, and moulded it out of chaos.

Let us not, however, be misunderstood: we are not among those who would endeavour very greatly to extend the chronology generally received, as regards the period of man's creation. The acknowledged antiquity of our globe does not argue that its last convulsions were not comparatively of a modern date, and after

THE IMMORTALS.

The flint-head

history of our species commences. discovered embedded in certain ancient strata, and the remains in Switzerland, may point, it is true, to antiquity; but the value of these data, we submit, if value is possessed, is by no means yet determined. Little doubt, exists that, from other and weightier considerations these just named, the period of the creation of man should be thrown back a very considerable time beyond that computed by the old chronologists.

Now our sun's proper motion in space being admitted, we are led to infer from analogy that every other sun, including the myriads that compose our astral System, the Milky Way, is also in a state of progression. Independently of the consideration that all God's works obey the laws of perfect harmony, and that other suns seem but a beautiful repetition of our own, we are driven to the conclusion that universal motion prevails in the heavens. The numerous binary and triple stars have for ever settled the question that the laws of gravitation obtain in the remotest parts of the universe. This important fact being granted, it follows that all the great bodies in space must have an onward movement around some centre of gravity, otherwise as certainly as our own planet, were it to be suddenly deprived of the centrifugal force it received at its creation, would drop into the sun, so would the mass of worlds, as elsewhere observed, obedient to the laws of attraction, no matter how widely stationed apart, gradually approach each other, and universal ruin be the result.

It appears, then, absolutely necessary from the known properties of material bodies, that no member of the great family of worlds should be stationary. But whither can the suns, with ourselves, be tending? they must without question move in orbits, and there must exist a centre of gravity, or the Creator's universe, speaking reverently, would be devoid of harmony, and his mighty engineering world, to human comprehension, exhibit imperfection. A central world, around which all the members of our astral System, at less or greater distances, should perform revolutions seems a strong necessity resulting from the very constitution of the universe. Astronomers have felt that such a "point force" must have existence somewhere; the great difficulty has been in determining its exact locality. Many men of emin

have employed their powers in this important search for the common centre of gravity of all the stars, and among them Professor Maëdlar stands conspicuous.

The elder Herschel, in determining the direction in which our sun is moving, made a gigantic stride towards a solution of the problem; but it has remained for Maëdlar, by a process as ingenious as laborious, to point out, with a high degree of probability, I would say with certainty, the star which has the honour and glory of occupying that spot in the universe, which may be termed the throne and spring-head of creation.

Our sun is situated at present in the Southern portion of the Milky Way, and is proceeding North. Hence the centre of gravity must be sought in the latter direction. We cannot pretend to explain here the sagacious method by which Maëdlar arrived at his conclusions; suffice it to say, that the star which answers all the conditions required by a central sun, is Alcyoné, the principal member of the Pleiad-group.

This beautiful and well-known cluster appears to the unassisted eye to be composed of seven stars, but the telescope reveals more than a hundred, and all are situated within a space not larger, apparently, than the circumference of the moon.

Among other indications or proofs that this is the real centre of the universe, may be stated the remarkable fact that the stars which surround Alcyoné have all a motion in the same direction; and extending observations further from its body, Maëdlar found that, out of one hundred and ten stars, only one appeared to move contrary to the course which he assumed each ought to maintain.

From what has been stated, we arrive at the conclusion that, amidst the innumerable stars which bespangle our heavens, a centre of gravity exists, around which their countless thousands revolve. The question then presents itself, is this centre of gravity merely a point in space, occupied by no globe superior in dimensions to other suns, but resembling the point between binary or quadruple stars, which, while they may be of similar size, perform revolutions around each other?—Or is there a body located there of sufficient magnitude to influence and control the motions of all other suns?—The mind at first refuses to believe that any body so stupendous can exist in creation; precisely as the young student in astronomy is staggered, when, for the first

time, he learns that the mass or weight of the sun exceeds that of the earth 355 thousand times, and the mass of all the planets united 500 times. But though he is astounded and incredulous, the fact remains undeniable.

We rise from our own subordinate System to the sun-systems of revolving multiple stars, and then to the combined astral scheme of the universe. If harmony distinguish the one, shall not harmony prevail in the others? We only extend the field of creation, and we can imagine nothing so august, nothing so mighty, but that the divine Artificer's workmanship shall transcend all our conceptions. To the power which is infinite no limit can be assigned; and He who could create one sun many times larger than the globes it presides over, could, for his lofty purposes, create another body many times larger than the combined mass of our sun and his luminous companions.

Nevertheless the law operating in our own System, that a governing body shall much exceed in size all the governed together, does not, as far as observation teaches us, prevail in regard to the Central Sun. The stars nearest Alcyoné revolve, it would seem, almost in circles, while those further off, including our own sun, move in curves more and more elongated, according to their increasing distances. But so nicely adjusted may the mutual attractions be, that the worlds probably revolve around the Central Sun, partly on the principle developed among the binary and quadruple stars, and partly through the gravitating force of an immense globe, placed in a peculiar position with reference to the entire sidereal scheme.

If this view prove the correct one, then Alcyoné may be regarded as a mighty world, it is true, but of course not proportioned in mass to the aggregate stars, as our sun is proportioned to the System he governs; its importance must be attributed in some measure to its superior magnitude, but also to the station which it occupies—that wonderful point in space around which all other worlds are constrained to revolve.

It has been shown that our sun is progressing towards a star in the Constellation Hercules; at the same time he may be advancing with that companion, in his elliptical orbit, around Alcyoné; but, in process of time, the sun's course will be altered; he will bend in his path, and, after performing his tremendous perihelion, will retire in an opposite direction again to the South.

Such are the considerations that lead us fully to accept Alcyoné, pointed out by Professor Maëdlar, as the grand central object of the universe, the "compelling" world of worlds. Objectors may urge that if Alcyoné be so stupendous, its superior magnitude would be apparent in the heavens, so that its august character would strike every observer. We answer that its immense distance from the earth, for its parallax has not yet been obtained, and other causes, operate in making it appear so inconsiderable a body.

Alcyoné may be said to occupy the Northern or North-Eastern focus in the great elliptical figure formed by the Milky-Way. Our sun is travelling from the South; presuming it moves in an elongated ellipse, we shall, in performing our perihelion, approach much nearer to this mighty luminary than we are at present. Then will Alcyoné shine a glorious object in the heavens, and doubt no longer will obscure the minds of the inhabitants of our globe, as to its stupendous character, and the high office it serves in Creation.

The remarks we have offered in the poem of "The Immortals," on the presumed existence of this Central Sun, and the inferences we have ventured to draw, must be left to the consideration and judgment of the reader. If there be any truth in our arguments; if such an august world or worlds, placed in the centre of creation, do exercise their necessary controlling power, thereby declaring that region to be the most remarkable and important in the universe, then we hope that our averments may be accepted by reason, as well as sanctioned by the spirit of religion.

There are some men, even accounted devout, who take no interest in the great questions connected with the marvels and glories of the universe around us, and who never ask how we shall exist hereafter, or where the region of happiness may be. Not so the inquiring spirit—such a spirit as that possessed by the celebrated divine and philosopher, Dr. Chalmers, and the amiable and distinguished President of Amherst College, U.S.* Though both eminently religious men, they have not hesitated, in their investigations, and in their search after important truths, to make statements which many individuals may refuse assent to, as being visionary, and contrary to the teachings or evidence of our

* Professor Hitchcock, author of "The Religion of Geology."

senses, they quite forgetting how limited in their powers these senses are, and that speculation, cautiously indulged in, oftentimes pioneers the way to the beautiful temple of truth.

To such spirits as these, who, while they bow to the authority of Holy Writ, think it their duty to exercise the intellect, however imperfect it be, which God has given them, we address our considerations. Convinced we are that they will not repudiate, without some good cause, the doctrine of a Central World, which, while it produces harmony through the laws of gravitation, lights up, with its neighbouring brother suns, a tract of sky pre-eminently beautiful, and suggests to us the strong and cheering probability that in or near such a central region, as being more worthy and glorious than any other part of the heavens, may be situated (we repeat it reverentially), the magnificent and happy home prepared for the virtuous children of the great Father of the universe.

THE END.

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